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Dissertation
GROUP THERAPY AS A METHOD FOR CHURCH WORK

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. THE RECOGNITION OF THE THERAPEUTIC VALUE OF GROUPS

The need for group experience has long been recognized as one of man's basic drives but it is only in very recent times that the therapeutic values of such experiences have been appreciated. Man is best understood as a social being whose destiny is tied up irrevocably with that of many others. Personal development is found to be pretty largely determined by a network of interpersonal relations and so the value of social experiences for good or for bad is being recognized increasingly. Since personality maladjustments generally arise in group situations, it is through group experiences that they are most satisfactorily treated. So it is that professional counselors, when dealing with poorly adjusted persons, often prescribe active affiliation with some social group. Since more group activity is carried on by the church than by any other single agency, indeed more than by all other agencies of informal education combined,¹ it is not surprising that the church is so often cited as offering

1. Cf. L. K. Hall, "Group Work in Religious Education," Religious Education, 40 (September-October, 1945), 257.

opportunity for needed social outlet.² There has been little realization on the part of the church, however, of the importance of groups in the therapeutic process and it is for that reason that this dissertation has been undertaken.

A partial understanding of group processes and of the therapeutic use of groups is gradually coming to light through undertakings in medical circles and especially in psychiatry. Psychiatry's growing interest in group therapy stems from both practical and theoretical sources. The practical reason is the tremendous increase in demand for psychiatric treatment, a demand conditioned by our culture and intensified by military psychiatric casualties. Speaking in terms of civilian practice, Dr. Kenneth E. Appel says:

General medical consultants in large cities find that from 45% to 50% of their consultations concern functional conditions where no organic pathology can be found. Moreover, psychiatric or emotional factors are estimated to cause from 50% to 65% of physical illnesses.³

The military situation makes the picture still more vivid. Even after over a million selectees had been rejected by

2. Cf. Henry Link, The Return to Religion (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936), 5.

3. "Psychiatric Therapy", J. McV. Hunt, editor, Personality and the Behavior Disorders. (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1944), II, 1150.

Selective Service because of psychoneuroses, it was still necessary to discharge over 400,000 psychiatric cases from the armed forces.⁴ Within the army the treatment of such cases was the largest single medical problem. Between 1941 and 1946, as Dr. Menninger points out, there were "over 1,000,000 admissions to the various neuropsychiatric services in army hospitals," and "at least three men received psychiatric help outside for everyone who entered the hospital."⁵ These percentages and figures from both civilian and military life help to make clear the magnitude of the problem which the medical world has faced. Since there were only about 4,000 psychiatrists⁶ in the country, the customary long term treatment through individual psychotherapy proved to be entirely inadequate for meeting the great demand for psychiatric help. It was out of sheer necessity that group therapy was attempted.

Even more significant than this practical consideration is the theoretical implication of a shift in em-

4. Cf. William B. Terhune, "The Psychiatric Problems of the Returning Soldier and Their Medical Management", The Connecticut State Medical Journal, 9 (January, 1945), 30.

5. William C. Menninger, "Lessons from Military Psychiatry for Civilian Psychiatry", Mental Hygiene, 30 (October, 1946), 571.

6. Cf. Anton T. Boisen, "Co-operative Inquiry in Religion", Religious Education, 40 (Sept.-Oct., 1945), 290.

phasis now making its appearance in the medical profession. A new theory of the relation of man's mind to health and disease is evolving. Whereas psychiatry in the past, having developed out of somatic medicine in which "the locus of physical ailment is an individual organism,"⁷ has been primarily concerned with the activities of the individual, there is now a "growing tendency to reformulate principles in psychology to explain man's psychodynamics in terms of his interaction pattern with the other members of the group."⁸ The emphasis is not only on what goes on inside the individual but also on what goes on among individuals.

This new emphasis, pointing to the value of group treatment, indicates that such treatment is more than just a substitute for the more customary method of individual work. The group itself is recognized as the therapeutic agent due to the interaction among the members who constitute it. In many instances the group is found to be a more effective form of therapy since the cause for difficulty can so often be traced to problems of interpersonal relations. Slavson explains it in this

7. J. L. Moreno, "Scientific Foundations of Group Psychotherapy", J. L. Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium (New York: Beacon House, Inc., 1945), 77.

8. Bruno Solby, "Group Psychotherapy and the Psychodramatic Method", Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 50.

way:

Those who find it necessary to deal with disoriented and socially broken-down persons have come to the conclusion that somewhere along the line of their growth, group relationships have played havoc with their biological and psychological needs.⁹

If early traumatization occurred in a group, then it is in a group that therapy can be most effective. Dr. Marsh gives whole-hearted acceptance to this social-emotional explanation of mental disease. He illustrates the principle by recalling a story told by Colonel Cody (Buffalo Bill) of a bull who always grazed on the outskirts of the herd because he had once been defeated in combat in front of the herd.

The crowd situation made the defeat complete... In the crowd he was cowardly, shut-in, without spirit, and negativistic. On the outskirts of the herd he was irritable.¹⁰

The adversary had long been dead, but the bull remained defeated. Until his relationship to the group could be restored he would remain defeated. Dr. Marsh gives his slogan for his psychiatric shield:

By the crowd have they been broken;
By the crowd shall they be healed.¹¹

9. S. R. Slavson, Character Education in a Democracy. (New York: Association Press, 1939), 85.

10. L. Cody Marsh, "Experiment in Group Treatment of Patients at Worcester State Hospital", Mental Hygiene, 17. (July, 1933), 407.

11. Loc cit.

Impelled by both practical and theoretical considerations, the medical profession is being forced to recognize the need and value of therapy groups.¹² Dr. Giles Thomas, after making a comprehensive survey of the literature in the field, declared: "There is ample evidence in the recent literature of the effectiveness of group psychotherapy in all psychiatric conditions."¹³ J. I. Meiers concurred in that opinion in a more recent survey but noted that in many circles the group method was still looked on with misgivings.¹⁴

2. RECENT TRENDS IN CHURCH WORK

If the medical world has been slow to make full use of the possibilities of group activity, the church has been even slower. To be sure, the emphasis in progressive churches to-day, following the lead of contemporary psychology, is turning to a recognition of the place of interpersonal relations. It is a new emphasis, however, in religious work. At the turn of the last century the

12. Cf. Winifred Overholser, Foreword to Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 13.

13. "Group Psychotherapy, A Review of the Recent Literature", Psychosomatic Medicine, 5 (April, 1943), 178.

14. Cf. Joseph I. Meiers, "Origins and Development of Group Psychotherapy", A Historical Survey, 1930-1945, Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 519.

church was engaged in a great missionary program which was the natural outgrowth of the stress of the revival period on personal evangelism. The emphasis was on the individual and on his need for personal salvation. In the early part of our century the emphasis shifted under the impact of empirical methodology and the church centered its attention on the social application of Christian teachings. The writings of such men as Shailer Mathews and Walter Rauschenbusch stirred the liberal church to its depths. Society rather than the individual became the focus of attention and the social, economic, and political world became the challenge for Christianization. Along with this interest in the social implications of Christianity there came a new enthusiasm for religious education. The entire methodology of Christian education was revamped and the teaching function of the church was given a new place of significance. With graded lessons for all ages and with departmentalization of the church schools, religious education was looked upon as the new Messiah.¹⁵ The stress, however, was on lesson material and on program planning and not so much on the child and his needs.

It has only been in very recent years that the

15. Cf. Charles T. Holman, Getting Down to Cases (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), 5.

church has centered its attention again on the individual and with this shift has come the development in the field of pastoral counseling. Once again the ministry has become person-minded. Progressive theological schools are providing opportunity for better understanding of people and their needs through programs of clinical training¹⁶ and the leaders of the church are equipping themselves to function more satisfactorily as counselors. Those who are trained in life situations and those who are trying to give help where assistance is called for are continually impressed with the need for recognizing the importance of social relations. Carl J. Schindler points this out in his book The Pastor as a Personal Counselor when he says, "All psychological maladjustments spring from the inability of the individual to find a proper relationship to the group."¹⁷ Pastoral counseling is filling a great need increasingly, but since it is by its very nature a person to person relationship it needs to be supplemented with group activity.

3. CHURCH GROUPS AND THERAPY

Group activity is obviously nothing new to the

16. Cf. Paul E. Johnson, "Clinical Education of the Pastor", Christian Education, 30 (March, 1947), 104-5, for a description of clinical training in the Boston area.

17. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1942), 126.

church for group organization has been employed throughout the entire history of the church. But the exploitation of groups, the scientific use of groups for therapeutic results, is quite a different matter from the mere existence of group organization. Pastors are charged with the responsibility for organizing group activity throughout the program of their churches, but for the most part they have little or no training in group work and have little understanding of the dynamics at work within groups. Even though much of the success or failure of the minister depends on his understanding of groups and of audiences, he is nevertheless seldom aware of the forces that are active within the groups. Moreover, in spite of the extensive use of group organization by the church, very little has been done in the way of scientifically controlled studies. It is only in the last three years that writers in the field of religious education have given specific attention to the study of group processes and to an evaluation of investigations carried on in social psychology.¹⁸ Even among the social psychologists and group work experts there is considerable uncertainty concerning the laws and princi-

18. Cf. L. K. Hall, "Group Work in Religious Education," Religious Education, 40 (September-October, 1945), 257-62. Cf. also, however, the early work of George A. Coe, A Social Theory of Religious Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928).

ples underlying group activity.¹⁹ The most careful work in analyzing group dynamics and the value of group activity has come in recent years from medical circles and so it is from the doctors that some of the best insights have been derived. Since the medical men have been interested in groups from the point of view of therapy, it is from a study of group therapy that the church can gain some real help.

The field of therapy is not unknown to the Christian church. The ministry of healing has been a recognized part of Christian service and indeed for many centuries the church was the only agency that was at all concerned with the maladjusted. One writer points out that the "modern cult of psychiatry is token of failure in religion rather than of success in psychiatry."²⁰ That the church needs to be recalled to its almost unlimited therapeutic possibilities is the thesis of the book The Church and Psychotherapy by Karl R. Stolz.²¹ Such an emphasis is now being rather widely recognized, but a realization of a need is only the first step toward solving the problem. This dissertation attempts to show how

19. Cf. Richard H. Edwards, A Person-Minded Ministry, (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1940), 163.

20. George A. Buttrick, Prayer (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942), 18.

21. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943.

the findings of scientific group therapy can be used to good advantage in church work. It is an effort at taking the guess work out of what happens in groups. Modern research is constantly confronted with the problem of the interchange of knowledge from one field of investigation to another. This dissertation attempts to bring within the focus of religious interest the findings of medical research in group therapy.

4. THE PROBLEM AND PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION

The problem of this dissertation, then, is to study group therapy with the particular interest of determining what insights gained in this work can be used with profit in church work. The aim is to analyze the principles that work for therapy within a group, to investigate the methods used in medical experiments, and to consider the applicability of these principles and methods to church work. It is not the intent to consider the creation of specially designed therapy groups in the church to rival the work being done in psychiatric clinics. This thesis does not propose the creation of new ecclesiastical machinery, but it does attempt to show how group therapy principles and methods can and should be applied to groups already existing in many church programs.

The plan of the thesis is to set forth the dynamics of group therapy in terms of their structure and function and then to show how some of these principles have

been employed consciously or unconsciously in the history of groups in the church. The more scientific use of these principles in medicine will then be traced and illustrations of typical instances of various types of therapeutic practice will be given. In order to give the dynamics of therapy a more concrete exposition, a detailed study of the Classes in Applied Psychology at the Boston Dispensary will be made, using objective evidence to support the claim of these classes. Since the writer of this thesis carries partial responsibility for the direction of these classes, the study will be made through first hand observation. The positive contributions of group therapy and the practicability of their application in the church will be the last major consideration. The conclusion will summarize the findings in terms of the church's unique opportunity.

In the interest of clarity several terms need to be defined. The term group will be used in various ways through the dissertation, sometimes referring to specially designed diagnostic and therapeutic classes and other times designating fellowship units. In general, unless otherwise qualified, the term will refer to voluntary units of not more than class-room size, that is, numbering about 40. J. M. Cotton sets this limit as he says, "Our own experience verified that of others that it is difficult for even the experienced group therapist to

handle groups larger than 30 to 40."²² The emphasis, then, is on relatively small and rather intimate groups.

The term therapy comes from the Greek word therapeutes which means attendant or servant. Thus, the original meaning of the word referred to the assistance given by a servant in combating disease.²³ It has always meant the beneficial influence of one person upon another. Dr. Jesse Taft defines therapy in the psychiatric sense in these words:

Therapy is a process in which a person who has been unable to go on living without more fear or guilt than he is willing or able to bear, somehow gains courage to live again, to face life positively instead of negatively.²⁴

In this thesis, however, a broader interpretation is given to the word so that it is conceived of more as social workers have used it of late: "the form of treatment which has a more satisfactory adjustment to life as its ultimate object."²⁵ Used in this broader sense, therapy can apply to the normal as well as to the abnormal person.

22. John M. Cotton, "The Psychiatric Treatment Program at Welch Convalescent Hospital", Franklin G. Ebaugh, editor, Military Neuropsychiatry. (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1946), 317.

23. Cf. J. L. Moreno, Psychodrama. (New York: Beacon House, 1946), I, 179.

24. The Dynamics of Therapy in a Controlled Relationship, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), 283.

25. Schindler, The Pastor as a Personal Counselor, 283.

Group therapy refers to the therapsutic process which is carried on through group interaction. It is a broad term covering many types of therapeutic work but in every case the emphasis is on the group as the therapeutic agent. Group psychotherapy refers to treatment by psychological methods through groups and implies the direction of a trained therapist who is well oriented in psychiatry. It is from this narrower field of psychotherapy that much of the data for this dissertation will be drawn. It is from this field that there has come a better understanding of the dynamics of group activity. What these dynamics are is the first major topic for consideration.

CHAPTER TWO

GROUP DYNAMICS

1. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Within any organized group there are forces at work effecting a change in the character and personality of the individual members. To these forces the name dynamics is given. Although the dynamics or mechanisms working for therapy within a group are not wholly known, there is no question but that such mechanisms do exist. Contemporary psychology has joined hands with social science in recognizing the dynamic facts of tension, growth and interaction which permeate all of life.¹ Dynamic psychology, which places its emphasis on the driving forces of life and particularly on motivations, developed first from the therapeutic interest of finding ways to help persons in time of need.² More and more it is being recognized that these driving forces can be understood best in the interaction of persons. "Group experiences," Slavson points out, "are the foundations of personality. Without them men would remain either on the level of the lower animals or in a

1. Cf. Paul E. Johnson, Psychology of Religion (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945), 7-8.

2. Cf. Seward Hiltner, "The Psychological Understanding of Religion," Crozer Quarterly, 24 (January, 1947), 22.

state of infantile ego-centricity, limited and isolated."³

Although group experience is recognized as the great modifier of behavior and the most significant civilizing force in human life, nevertheless it is apparent that not all group activity works toward such a desirable end. The gregarious impulse can lead to undisciplined and primitive mob action as well as to productive co-operative experience. It is necessary, therefore, to distinguish between the mass or conglomeration of people that make up a crowd and the more highly selected individuals who form a deliberate group.

Crowd psychology in all of its intricate theoretical implications cannot be dealt with in the scope of this dissertation, but a brief summary of some of the more significant principles helps in an understanding of organized groups. Dr. L. Cody Marsh selects from the writings of Le Bon, McDougall, Freud, Fisher, Unwit and Kraskovic inter alia and lists nineteen principles of relevant value for any work with groups:

1. In the crowd an individual gets a sense of invincible power.
2. One yields to what one would not yield to alone.
3. The sense of responsibility is lost, except to the ideals of the group.
4. Conscience is very largely lost (and what a poor guide it is!).

3. Character Education in a Democracy (New York: Association Press, 1939), 73.

5. Self-consciousness is lost.
6. One feels ashamed to show oneself to disadvantage.
7. Rivalry stimulates the individual toward improvement.
8. There is contagion in the crowd.
9. The individual sacrifices personal interest to the group: even the beloved symptoms are temporarily dropped.
10. The individual loses his conscious personality and takes on that of the leader and the group.
11. As a group member he is more attentive, more accessible, in keener contact with life.
12. The group is impulsive. Thus it can be motivated easily.
13. The group member is credulous. He loses his critical faculty. He accepts what he will not accept alone.
14. In the group one's feelings are simple, but exaggerated.
15. The group member thinks in images.
16. The group member respects kindness and the force of the group members.
17. Group members must have something in common, an emotional bias, to succeed as a group.
18. The greater the crowd, the greater the acme of emotion.
19. In the crowd there is a compulsion at work.⁴

These principles suggest some of the factors common to both crowds and groups. There are, however, certain distinct differences between the crowd and the group. One of the most significant differences lies in the attitude toward others. In the crowd one forgets not only himself, but others as well, whereas in a group the regard for others is stimulated and heightened. Thus membership in a group aids in the therapeutic process of moving from a

4. "Group Treatment of the Psychoses by the Psychological Equivalent of the Revival," Mental Hygiene, 15 (April, 1931), 342-43.

self-centeredness through responsiveness to interaction with others. Primitive impulses, which are allowed unobstructed expression in the crowd, are checked and modified along social lines in the group. The accomplishment of such therapeutic ends obviously implies a rather definite organization which is in sharp contrast to the more or less unorganized, haphazard collection of individuals in a crowd. Some organization is implied in Slavson's definition of a group:

...A group is conceived as consisting of three or more persons in an informal relation where there is a maximum interpenetration and prolonged direct emotional activity among the individuals constituting it, and as a result of which the personality of each member is modified.⁵

It is this type of group that will be dealt with throughout this dissertation. McDougall points out the limitless possibilities for personality modification in such groups as he writes:

The better kinds of organization render group life the great ennobling influence by aid of which alone man rises a little above the animals and may even aspire to fellowship with the angels.⁶

Any consideration of groups organized for personality modification leads immediately into the field of social work. Social work as a profession has divided its activi-

5. Character Education in a Democracy, 74.

6. William McDougall, The Group Mind (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920), 28.

ties into three major fields: group work, case work, and community organization. Group work, the field of social work of particular interest in this discussion, is concerned largely with character building in leisure time activities. It is only in comparatively recent times that group workers have begun to see the great opportunity that is theirs in helping individuals to make a better adjustment by living through problems of human relations in an actual social experience. Joshua Lieberman sums up what he calls the "most basic trend in group work thinking" in these words:

Group work is....in an excellent position to aid the individual's adjustment to the complexities of modern community living - - more, it may be able to help him master the social difficulties that threaten further social progress and even civilization itself.⁷

When preparation for citizenship in a democracy is added to character building, then the aims of progressive education have been stated,⁸ and basic in such educational procedure is the importance placed on group interaction. The controlling influence is no longer considered to be the teacher but instead is found in the group. "We have come to recognize," Slavson says, "that all important edu-

7. Lieberman, editor, New Trends in Group Work (New York: Association Press, 1938), v.

8. Cf. Lieberman, "Group Work Aims and Progressive Education," *ibid.*, 62.

cation is derived from group experience."⁹ Here is but another indication of the growing trend throughout all fields of thought and activity to turn from a purely individual centered emphasis to one which gives full recognition to the significance of group experience.

This growing awareness of the importance of interpersonal relations in social work and in education re-emphasizes the validity of group therapeutic practice, and studies from these two fields have helped to clarify the dynamics at work in groups. It is of particular interest to note that the groups which serve therapeutic ends may vary greatly, but the dynamics are pretty generally the same. Dr. Braceland puts it tersely: "The laws governing group action, cohesions, and stratification are applicable to all groups."¹⁰ Dr. Klapman is likewise definite on this point: "The principles and dynamics of group psychotherapy are the same with all manner and complexions of groups, although the particular modes of application may vary."¹¹ Regardless, then, whether the group activity being studied is carried on with psychotic patients, with psychoneurotics, with delinquents, with problem children,

9. Character Education in a Democracy, 75

10. Francis J. Braceland, "Group Psychotherapy," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 45.

11. Jacob W. Klapman, Group Psychotherapy: Theory and Practice (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1946), v-vi.

or with stutterers the dynamics are generally the same. Of particular significance for this dissertation is the point made by Klapman that the dynamics are the same in groups of normal people as well. "The same mechanism," he says, referring to those found at work among psychotics, "but in attenuated form are at work with the more socially adjusted psychoneurotic patients, the so-called normals, and the near normals."¹² The suggestion, then, is that there are principles working for therapy not only in groups particularly designed for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes but also in the large number of spontaneous groups which are formed on a voluntary basis with the primary purpose of providing enjoyment. "There seems little doubt," Dr. Nathan W. Ackerman says, "that spontaneous group interaction can be harnessed, controlled, and directed toward therapeutic ends."¹³ Indeed, among the more or less normal persons such as one finds in the average church group, such spontaneous organization can lead to the most effective form of mutual influence. In such a natural setting there is no deliberate or conscious effort at therapy, but the dynamics in the situation are nevertheless working in

12. Group Psychotherapy: Theory and Practice, 60.

13. "Dynamic Patterns in Group Psychotherapy," Psychiatry, 7 (November, 1944), 343.

that direction.¹⁴

What these specific dynamics are is the next matter for consideration. They will be dealt with first in terms of their structure, that is the patterns of relationship which indicate how the forces within a group operate, and then in terms of their function, that is the results that grow out of such patterns of activity.

2. THE STRUCTURE OF GROUP DYNAMICS

The most obvious pattern of group activity is inter-stimulation. Slavson, who has done some very careful work in analyzing group dynamics, uses the term interstimulation and defines it as the "mutual intensification of the central emotion."¹⁵ He illustrates his meaning by reference to electrical induction where one coil becomes charged when placed within the field of another coil even though there is no direct contact.¹⁶ Interstimulation in its most obvious form is found in a mob where there is a heightening of a primary emotion due to the presence of others. In a less intense but nevertheless very significant form the mechanism plays a part in organized groups. Henry N.

14. Cf. Slavson, An Introduction to Group Therapy (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1943), vi.

15. Character Education in a Democracy, 76.

16. *Ibid.*, 76-77.

Wieman stressed the intensification of any experience through the sharing of it.

Each [one] who has the experience acts as a stimulus on the others to intensify the feeling, if it is a feeling that is shared, or to make the thought more vivid and compelling, if it is a thought, to make the aspiration more absorbing and thrilling, if it is an aspiration that is shared.¹⁷

The sharing of a common experience leads to a high degree of suggestibility. Stimulated by the presence of others, the contagion of the group tends to carry all of the members along the line of the dominant emotion. With this heightened suggestibility there is a corresponding lowering of resistance so that ideas and emotions of the group are quite readily transmitted to all of the members.

Interstimulation does not lead toward a modification of behavior but it does mean a stimulation of interest and an intensification of activity. An initial suggestion or emotion is quickly picked up by the group and is enhanced as it is accepted. As the emotional atmosphere of a group is intensified, persons who have shown little interest in the co-operative activity are drawn into the group by the very contagion of the enthusiastic presence of others. The writer has seen innumerable in-

17. Methods of Private Religious Living (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), 140.

stances of this mechanism at work in a mental hospital¹⁸ where enthusiasm generated by a game or a lively discussion has drawn inactive and isolated individuals into active participation without any organized effort at doing so. In another situation¹⁹ the writer has seen a woman, B. A., listen to a cataloguing of personal fears by members of a group therapy class and then stand up to tell for the first time of the fear that had dominated her existence. She admitted that never before had she been able to face and express the fear. It was the stimulation of the recitations of others that led her to give her personal testimony.

This mechanism of interstimulation operates most effectively where there is a clearly defined rallying point. The central point around which individuals are drawn together may be a common cause or it may be loyalty to a person. The sharper the emotion-arousing center is defined or recognized, the more the emotion will be intensified. Thus intense loyalty to a leader heightens the entire atmosphere of a group. Along with the striving after a common objective there is often found a feeling of competition in which each group member tries to outdo the other in

18. Boston Psychopathic Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts, 1947.

19. Class in Applied Psychology, Boston Dispensary, Boston, Massachusetts, May 5, 1947.

reaching the goal. Such rivalry often leads effectively toward greater effort, a significant factor for therapy.

A second dynamic in group activity is interaction. Whereas through interstimulation emotion is simply intensified, through interaction ideas are modified leading to a change in behavior. Interaction acts to inhibit emotionalism as the influence of one member makes itself felt on another. Regina Wieman speaks of creative interaction as "the most important thing in human life" and defines it as "reciprocating stimulation and responsiveness,....mutual interpretation and transformation."²⁰

Through interaction the group serves in a sense as a neutralizer of emotion and as such makes a major contribution to personality development.²¹ The pet ideas of one individual are modified by the ideas of others in the group. A greater objectivity is developed as one discovers that his own problems which seem so unique and peculiar to himself are found to be common with many. With the discovery that others face similar situations, a greater objectivity is developed that points toward an adequate dealing with the problem. The recognition of the problems of others makes one's own seem less formidable.

20. The Family Lives its Religion (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1941), 20-21.

21. Cf. Slavson, Character Education in a Democracy, 79.

Not only is there developed a greater objectivity toward personal problems, but there also occurs a realignment of values in the presence of differing standards of others. One person's characteristic approach to a problem is evaluated in the light of methods used by others and as a result new criteria are formed and new and improved patterns of behavior are embraced. A compromise is effected. The desire to be accepted by the group is incentive enough to lower personal resistance to change. Personal tensions are lessened as an individual voluntarily modifies his behavior to fit more closely into that observed to be effective in other group members. The experience of the group thus serves as the background against which one regulates his activity.

To be sure, interaction does not always lead to such favorable results. If there is no modification of individual viewpoints then emotional pressure increases and conflict is the inevitable result. On the other hand, individual ideas and drives can be so completely neutralized that the result for the whole group is inactivity and complete ineffectiveness. It is the function of the group leader to help channel group interaction toward productive growth.

A third dynamic of group activity is transference. The term is used especially in psychoanalysis and refers to the relationship existing between the patient and the ther-

apist. Klapman describes transference as:

The psychological process by which the patient accepts the therapist as a parent and in which he directs on the therapist those very fundamental emotional impulses which he originally entertained toward the first person or persons of significance to him.²²

As these fundamental emotions are directed toward the therapist, both positive and negative feelings and desires are relived and in this emotional catharsis they are lessened in their intensity and are partially freed from the unconscious where they have been repressed. The psychoanalyst accepts both amicable and hostile feelings without condemnation and with obvious understanding. As the relationship becomes more secure through the permissive attitude of the analyst and through his non-judgmental acceptance of all feelings expressed, the transference tends to become positive, that is the patient accepts the therapist as a parent substitute and tries to please him just as he tried in childhood to please his parents.

Klapman points out the significance of this mechanism as he says: "The emotional matrix out of which the best therapeutic results may be expected to crystallize is inevitably the transference."²³ It needs to be pointed out, nevertheless, that transference leads to a relationship in which the patient becomes wholly dependent on the therapist.

22. Group Psychotherapy: Theory and Practice, 61.

23. *Ibid.*, 59.

Because the patient is able to work through his emotions with the analyst and is able to relate himself to another person in a positive way, he is therefore better able to relate himself to others in society. However, once the therapeutic work has been done, the transference with its dependent relationship has to be broken. In the group situation much of the value of transference is retained without its disadvantages.

In the group situation the cathartic release of emotion is directed not only toward the group leader but is also spread to the members of the group and to the group as a whole. Because of the presence of different people with different types of personality make-up there is abundant opportunity for diluting emotional pressure by directing it toward several different persons. Hostility toward the leader may be shunted off to other group members. The group serves the same purpose accomplished by the individual dependent relationship with the therapist; it provides acceptance and support and gives opportunity for emotional release. Slavson shows how the mechanism works in a group of children:

The desire to be accepted serves the same function as does transference in individual treatment. Just as the patient in individual therapy improves in order to please the therapist, in Group Therapy the child alters his behavior and attitudes so that he may be accepted by the group.²⁴

24. An Introduction to Group Therapy, 15.

Individual needs are being met more permanently in the group than in the dependent relationship to one person. Not only is the necessity of breaking the dependency avoided, but by adjusting to the group a long step is made toward adjusting to society.

Transference depends on the establishment of a relationship which can meet the vital needs of a person, needs which have developed out of past experiences and which carry strong emotional overtones. Such a relationship is more easily established in a group than in a person to person situation. Slavson explains how the individual reacts to the group:

The group does not invade the intimate precincts of personality, deep anxieties and traumata. A therapy group provides latitude....The group stimulates activity, yet makes no direct and immediate demands upon him. In this way he can establish relations at his own pace.²⁵

Such relations are closely allied to another dynamic called identification.

Identification is the process by which an individual associates himself with attitudes of another and modifies his behavior to conform with that of others. In more technical phraseology identification is "the process by which real or imagined characteristics of one person are reproduced in the personality of another by unconscious or part-

25. An Introduction to Group Therapy, 202.

ly unconscious mechanisms."²⁶ This mechanism operates throughout all of life, is the basis of growth, and is at the very heart of all social life. E. W. Lazell speaks of it as "the basis of friendship, pity, charity, and of society itself."²⁷ Through expanding identifications, first with individuals in the immediate family and then with larger and larger groups, the child's egocentric drives as Slavson shows, "are normally transformed into social concerns and interests in others."²⁸ Slavson goes on to explain more fully how this mechanism operates in group activity with children:

This group experience reduces the child's life-sustaining egocentricity and develops a growing capacity to fuse his life with others. The decrease in emotional isolation makes the children accessible to the influences of the world and lays the foundation for character reconstruction and desirable changes in attitudes.²⁹

Just as the child needs to identify himself with members of the family group, so the adult needs to form identifications with others in wider groups. Where such associations are not formed, then egocentricity, psychological

26. A. H. Maslow and Bela Mittelman, Principles of Abnormal Psychology (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1941), 603.

27. "Group Psychotherapy," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 103.

28. An Introduction to Group Therapy, 18.

29. Loc. cit.

isolation, and inner conflict result. The need for group experience is clearly visible here.

The unique role of the group needs to be stressed at this point, for identification is not to be thought of in purely person-to-person terms. It is actually membership in the group and identification with the group that accomplishes the progressive development of the individual. In referring to the family group, Nathan Ackerman says: "The child's membership in it determines his character over and above the emotional content of his tie to any one member of the family."³⁰ The character of the child continues its development through an expanding series of groups such as: nursery, play, and school groups; clubs of one sex; mixed clubs; fraternities, occupational groups, etc.

The therapeutic value of such group identification is dealt with later but should be mentioned briefly here. As the individual identifies himself with the group he tends to take on the character of the group and to lose his acute awareness of personal differences. The emotional unity of the group strives to uncover a common denominator which will include all its members. When habits, ideas, and attitudes which had seemed especially undesirable and

30. "Dynamic Patterns in Group Psychotherapy," Psychiatry, 7 (November, 1944), 342.

even repugnant are viewed against the common problem they lose much of their intensity. By merging one's personality with the life of the group, one discovers new freedom for himself. "Whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it."³¹

Such assimilation into the group is not easily accomplished by everyone. Some individuals never become integrated into the life of the group and continue to function as individualists, but they are the exception rather than the rule. As persons identify themselves with the group they tend to turn their energies away from destructive aggressions toward socially useful action. The more completely a person identifies himself with the group, the more he feels he belongs to the group as an integral part, then the less he needs the patterns of evasion and defense and rationalization that he has built up to protect himself. Through identification with the group he frees himself for further growth and development.

3. THE FUNCTION OF GROUP DYNAMICS

Group dynamics have been considered in terms of their structure, and in doing so it was impossible not to touch on their function. The function or the results will

³¹. Luke 17:33b. All Biblical references are from the American Standard Revised Edition.

now be dealt with separately and in more detail.

One of the most significant results of group activity lies in the enlarged confidence that is developed in the individual member. In our competitive society it is the exceptional person who is free from rejections and hostilities and injuries to his self-esteem. Since much emotional strain develops in group relations, it is in the group setting that self-confidence can best be regained. The group meets the need for acceptance and protection. In providing reassurance against rejection the group experience frees the individual from a dependence on protecting patterns of assumed superiority and self-centeredness. Freed from such unnecessary defense, the energies of the individual can be directed into productive and socially useful channels.

Moreover, group membership provides recognition and gives status. Members have the well known feeling of being on the inside. They belong; they are given recognition; they are sought after for their contribution. Because they are needed they feel important. By identifying themselves with groups guided by socially desirable purposes they feel themselves to be a part of worthwhile endeavors.

Even more significant is the reduction of the sense of isolation that so many distressed persons feel. In the group one learns that the feelings of frustration and

hostilities and resentments which seemed to set him apart from other men and make him unacceptable to society are common to everyone. The group helps one to understand, for example, that ambivalent feelings of love and hostility toward members of the family are natural and normal. Rather than setting one apart they serve in a group to help him to see himself as a part of the frailties of mankind. Striking evidence of this enlarging of confidence through group participation is given by E. W. Lazell as he tells of the response of patients in a mental hospital to group lectures:

Silent, dreamy boys suddenly became interested and drank in every word, realizing that here was someone who understood their troubles. Ashamed of themselves and suffering from a profound feeling of inferiority, guilt, and failure, and afraid to confess to anybody because they considered themselves unique in their mental degradation, they were greatly relieved when told that all mankind has to contend with the same emotions that had broken them down.³²

In a similar way a feeling of helplessness when faced with external environmental problems is reduced in the presence of others. Group associations make it rapidly apparent that everyone is struggling with some unhappy circumstance. Problems that seemed particularly formidable lose their intensity when viewed in the light of similar problems of others. Instead of feeling overwhelmed

32. "The Group Psychiatric Treatment of Dementia Praecox by Lectures in Mental Re-education," U. S. Veterans Bureau Medical Bulletin, 6 (September, 1930), 733.

by the force of his own difficulties, the group member sees his situation as a part of the common lot of man. By helping others to meet their burdens, he finds new strength for himself. Acquiring a feeling of power from his association with the group he counts himself better able to cope with his personal perplexities.

Equally as significant as the overcoming of a feeling of helplessness is the increase in frustration tolerance. Accepted by the group in spite of personal peculiarities and given status in it, the individual no longer needs to feel anxious and insecure in his interpersonal relations, and as anxieties are reduced and accompanying tensions are dissolved he is better able to deal with irritating opposition. Slavson sums it up well as he says, "The resulting relaxation disposes him to accept a reasonable amount of domination, control, and denial."³³ With increased ability to bear frustration, the individual achieves new mastery over a variety of situations.

A second result of group activity is found in socialization. The group stimulates the individual to activity and encourages activity on a social level. Some of the most dramatic results in group therapy as witnessed in mental institutions fall into this category. Klapman gives a vivid picture that is quite typical of many obser-

33. An Introduction to Group Therapy, 220.

vations showing how a group atmosphere tends to aid in socializing a withdrawn (in this case paranoid) patient. The patient was lolling on a bed within twenty-five feet of the group.

Loudly swearing obscenely and showering threats and vituperations on the therapist and patients in the class he attempted to disrupt proceedings. After several weeks of this behavior ... gradually, from his perch he began to make (still truculent) queries which no one answered, and occasionally he attempted to answer a question addressed to someone in the class. Finally, after a number of weeks, of his own accord, he took his place in the classwork in a most co-operative and friendly manner.³⁴

Here was the gradual discovery of the satisfactions that are derived from social adjustment. The influence of a group exercises an extroverting function on the withdrawn and introverted person and thus helps to direct emotional drives into socially useful channels. Freud offers the explanation that "love relationships ... constitute the essence of the group mind."³⁵ He claims that when the libido fails to find an outlet in the outside world then the person becomes introverted and absorbed in himself. The group helps in re-awakening the libido by stimulating interest in others in the group. L. Cody Marsh has emphasized the same idea. Speaking of group therapy he says:

34. Group Psychotherapy: Theory and Practice, 58-59.

35. Sigmund Freud, Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego (London: International Psychoanalytic Press, 1922), 40.

The aim is to extrovert all energies at the social level. The patient passes through a psychological revival meeting, where he is converted from introspection, phantasy, bitterness, sham, inferiority, etc., to extrospection, constructive planning, cheerfulness, assurance, security, etc.³⁶

This extroverting function that leads to greater socialization is accomplished largely because of a strong desire to be accepted by the group. Negative reactions to egoistic trends serve as a most powerful force in modifying behavior. When an individual's self-indulgence seems to erect a barrier that threatens exclusion from the group, then a most effective check on such self-centered activity is provided. The writer has witnessed this socializing process at work in a mental hospital ³⁷ where a new patient who was extremely critical of the institution and expressed his criticism freely soon found himself excluded from spontaneous group activity and so gradually learned to temper his criticism in order to be included in the social life of the other patients. Aggressive behavior is effectively checked by expressed or unexpressed group disapproval.

The socializing influence of a group leads to a greater concern about the way of life of others. In the give and take of social intercourse the individual begins

36. "Group Treatment of the Psychoses by the Psychological Equivalent of the Revival," Mental Hygiene, 15 (April, 1931), 341.

37. Boston Psychopathic Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts, July, 1947.

to understand how many of his problems are common to all men. Beneath the facade of self-sufficiency one discovers the same feelings of inadequacy, the same longings, the same suffering that had seemed to be so unique. The writer has been impressed over and over again by the effect made on newcomers to a class in group therapy³⁸ by the presence of well dressed and healthy appearing members whose exterior belies their interior suffering. As such normal appearing individuals tell of their personal trials and sufferings, newcomers recognize the common bond of misery and take new hope. A warm feeling of comradeship develops which serves to displace psychological insularity with social responsiveness.

Moreover, participation in group activities helps the timid individual to find his niche in the scheme of things by encouraging and recognizing contributions to the group life. Social skills are developed through co-operative activity where there is less danger of failing. Emotional support from other members encourages personal initiative in attempting new experience. A careful analysis of a group discussion project undertaken with employees in an institution³⁹ revealed how timid and retiring persons were

38. Class in Applied Psychology, Boston Dispensary.

39. Cf. Robert W. Hyde, "Problems of Living Seminar," Unpublished article, Boston Psychopathic Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts, May, 1947.

gradually drawn into active discussion through the socializing effect of a favorable group atmosphere. Each spontaneous contribution helped to develop a feeling of greater personal worth. Responsibility voluntarily assumed for group activity aided in the development of social leadership which in turn tended to lessen inferiority feelings.

It is significant that Harrison S. Elliott and Grace L. Elliott in their book Solving Personal Problems⁴⁰ point out three factors essential to personality health - - all three of which are realized only in interpersonal relations. These factors are: a reasonable sense of security, a sense of achievement, and a feeling that others care. The socializing process plays a leading role in satisfying these basic needs.

A third result of group activity is that of re-education. Since much of human unhappiness and maladjustment grows out of wrong ideas and unhealthy attitudes, the need for new understanding and correct information is apparent. Intellectual understanding is a significant therapeutic tool. Louis Wender points out how an unexpected noise is accepted calmly when the origin is understood.⁴¹ Intellec-

40. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1936. The significance of these three factors makes up the body of this book.

41. Cf. "The Dynamics of Group Psychotherapy," Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease 84 (July, 1936), 59.

tual understanding, however, as Wender's illustration shows, is closely allied to the emotional life. It is not so much reason as it is emotion that resists re-education.

It is the group situation that aids re-education by lowering resistance. Enthusiasm engendered by a group helps to sell a new idea so that it is accepted more willingly. When others in the group accept new ideas and give vocal testimony to their workability, there is an active compulsion at work that tends toward general acceptance. The reverse is true, too, for when an individual finds his idea opposed by the group, and when disapproval of his idea is voiced, the pressure of the group leads to a questioning of the idea and possibly to its discard. Each person feels impelled to measure up to the standard of the group even though it means acceptance of entirely new ideas. Joseph H. Pratt stresses the significance of this emotional tone of the group in reporting on his Boston Dispensary Class:

It is evident that the nature of psychological laws is such that the group method as organized possesses certain elements that act powerfully in energizing helpful emotions and these emotions are transmuted into action with the result that mental and physical health has often quickly improved.⁴²

The impersonality of the group situation aids in re-

42. "The Influence of Emotions in the Causation and Cure of Psychoneuroses," International Clinics, 4 (December, 1934), 16.

education. In the group indirect suggestion functions far more effectively than direct individual indoctrination. Individuals tend to identify themselves with problems under discussion and to make unconscious application to their own situation. Because ideas are not directed specifically to them, they lower their resistance and give more open-minded consideration. Greater objectivity toward personal problems aids in more constructive dealing with them. Such indirect suggestion may come from the leader, but in the group it comes even more effectively from other group members. Abraham A. Low points out how group members influence one another in a class for neurotic persons:

The resistance is easily overcome in the group interview. The fellow sufferer who explains how he "licked" his frightful palpitations after years of invalidism cannot possibly be suspected of trying to sell something. The "colleague" is convincing. He convinces the novice that chronic conditions are not hopeless.⁴³

Such explanation from a fellow sufferer gives a real impetus to the re-educative process.

A fourth result of group activity is the creation of a laboratory in social living. In a real social experience which approximates everyday life various forms of interpersonal relations are lived out and thus tested.

43. "The Combined System of Group Psychotherapy and Self-Help as Practiced by Recovery, Inc.," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 95-96.

To insight acquired through re-education there is added actual activity in which socialized emotion is tried out realistically. In a sense this function includes all the dynamics of group activity. Klapman points out its significance:

In group therapy there is more of an objective living through, a more clear-cut living demonstration of social standards and the social "conscience", and this, aside from the greater convenience and economy of time, is the unique contribution of group psychotherapy.⁴⁴

Although every group serves as a laboratory to some degree, in certain special groups the principle is seen in its clearest form. In psychodrama and in play therapy, both of which will be dealt with later, this living through of ideas and attitudes in the mock society of the group finds most vivid expression.

The group provides a suitable medium for the living through of feelings because from a psychological viewpoint the group repeats the family situation. For some persons it becomes a substitute family within which the ties of loyalty are strong enough to permit the release of rebellion, frustration, and pent up hostilities. Thus the group provides the atmosphere in which an effective emotional catharsis can take place. Feelings originally felt toward parents and siblings but repressed are given opportunity for release in the substitute group. The group

⁴⁴. Group Psychotherapy: Theory and Practice, 45.

leader becomes a substitute parent and the members become substitute siblings. The entire group helps in the resolving of conflicts as individual members testify to having similar hostilities and rebellions and anxieties about them. Guilt felt about such feelings of aggression is reduced as it becomes clear that such impulses are common to all and are not inconsistent with acceptable social conduct.

In this process of emotional release there is also a modifying of attitudes. The unfavorable response of the group to overt acts of non-social conduct serve effectively to change behavior. "In releasing these pent-up drives, patients use the group as a sounding board for testing real meaning of their impulses and the validity of their particular concepts of social reality."⁴⁵ Thus through actual testing in the miniature society of a group, the individual sees the result of his socially undesirable acts and is given incentive for a re-direction of his emotions in order to be better accepted by his group. The standards of the group operate something like the highly significant codes of primary groups (such as the family or play groups).

There is an even more positive aspect to this group

⁴⁵. Nathan Ackerman, "Group Psychotherapy with Veterans," Mental Hygiene, 30 (October, 1946), 564.

function as a social laboratory. Not only does the individual find that undesirable behavior erects a barrier between him and the group, but he also discovers the effectiveness of conduct that is fully acceptable. He finds that a defensive, hostile attitude is not necessary.

Slavson illustrates this idea by referring to a play therapy group with children:

Not only are the egocentric drives modified and perception of threat reduced but, what is even more important, the child discovers the startling fact that conflict and hostility need not remain permanent...; that equilibrium can be restored and that hatreds are eliminated in a free group process as soon as such equilibrium is attained.⁴⁶

Through the group experience such a significant change of attitude can be accomplished so that there is an entirely new alignment of emotional forces. By actual experimentation in the group laboratory the individual discovers for himself the practicability of life lived according to the highest standards of society.

These dynamics of group activity, expressed in terms of structure and function, have been present in all groups but it is only in recent studies that they have been isolated, recognized, and put to effective use. By turning to a survey of group activity in Christian history it becomes clear that these dynamics have always been at work in the church even though not consciously recognized. The

46. An Introduction to Group Therapy, 10-11.

next chapter shows how prevalent group activities have been in the church in every era and so indicates the need for a better understanding of the dynamics involved.

CHAPTER THREE

GROUP EXPERIENCE IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

From its earliest beginnings Christianity has been a social religion. Although the relationship of an individual to his God has been of primary importance, nevertheless, the development of that relationship has been nurtured in a community of believers and the measure of its sincerity has been in social living. The prominence given to interpersonal relationships has led Moreno to speak of Christianity "as the greatest and most ingenious psycho-therapeutic procedure man has ever invented."¹

1. THE CENTRALITY OF FELLOWSHIP

The one factor that has been most responsible in promoting the therapeutic task of the church is fellowship. From the time of Christ, throughout the organized church in its centuries of history right down to the present day, the centrality of Christian fellowship has been apparent to any careful observer. "The healing, supporting, and hygienic fellowship of the church"² will be noted over and over again in the brief sketches that follow of group activity within

1. Who Shall Survive? (Washington, D.C.: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1934), 4.

2. Elmer G. Homrighausen in the Introduction to Stolz, The Church and Psychotherapy, 8.

the church.

The fellowship of the church, where it has meant the most, has been of the organic type.³ An organic association implies interaction among members in a way such as to result in personality building. In an atmosphere of deep mutual understanding, unique personalities so interact with each other that without losing their individuality, each is clarified and enriched and at the same time each is intimately related to the others in the group.

Each unique individuality is organically and co-operatively connected with the others, just as the limbs of the human body, while totally different from the heart and lungs, yet are so organically connected that each in its own unique diversity fulfills a function that nourishes, sustains, and enriches all the others.⁴

Such organic fellowship is more than merely a sympathetic association in which feelings or purposes are shared in common. It is also more than a group called together to accomplish good works. It is a creative interaction in which each person finds himself more fully; it is the process in which the working of God is most keenly felt.

In the discussion that follows it will become apparent that the fellowship characterizing church groups was felt to be a more than human fellowship. The author of

3. The term "organic" and the explanation of it is taken from Henry H. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), 139- 51.

4. Ibid., 144.

the first epistle of John makes this clear as he states his purpose:

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.⁵

The church has always been most alive when the consciousness of God's spirit has been most keenly felt, and such a consciousness has been realized best in group life. "The Spirit of God labours through groups, and these groups restore the lost vitality of the Church and breathe into it fresh life."⁶

The new vitality found in interacting groups guided by the "spirit of God" has shown itself in a stream of influence that has poured out with cleansing power into the life of the Church and of society as a whole. Individual persons whose lives have been changed through intimate contact with religious groups proceed then to change society. In the discussion that follows attention will be given to those group movements within the church which have been characterized by intimate creative fellowship, which have been keenly aware of the power of God, and which have exerted a purifying power on the Church and society. Selection will of necessity be representative rather than ex-

5. I John 1:3.

6. Robert H. Murray, Group Movements Throughout the Ages (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Limited, 1935), 19.

haustive.

2. THE ANCIENT ERA

Christ and the Disciples

Group life in the history of the Christian Church begins rightfully with Jesus. Like most great teachers, Jesus did much of his work in and through groups. Whether in teaching or in healing he recognized the interpersonal relations which were significant in the particular social setting and used them discriminatingly to accomplish his purpose. Moreno points out how Jesus worked: "He treated Judas in arguing with Peter, Martha through Mary, the Pharisees through Magdalene."⁷

Even more significant than this healing ministry was the intimate group life experienced by Christ and the twelve disciples. There is no more striking demonstration of the power of a creative group interaction anywhere in history than is found in this band of disciples. Twelve humble men, obscure fishermen and simple peasants, gathered together with Christ in a stimulating organic fellowship "were transformed," as Regina W. Wieman says, "into world shaking figures."

7. "Application of the Group Method to the Classification of Prisoners," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 38.

(It was) a little group which worked together in such a way that it generated a freedom and richness and world-transforming power greater than had ever been known before.⁸

Each individual member began to grow in his own unique pattern and yet the very fact of growth was inspired by the group experience. The Last Supper with its one table, its one loaf, and its one cup provided a symbolism of the inner fellowship which still holds to-day. The intimate and fruitful associations of the disciples set the pattern for church fellowship and made clear the potentialities inherent in group life.

The Apostolic Church

The early church was not so much an institution as it was a spiritual family. The scriptural account gives a clear picture of the life of the young Christians: "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in breaking of bread and the prayers."⁹ The breaking of bread together suggests a material as well as a spiritual fellowship in which they "had all things in common."¹⁰ They were experiencing faith together, living out the way of life taught to them by Christ's disciples. They

8. The Family Lives its Religion (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1941), 50.

9. Acts 2:42.

10. Acts 2:44.

were sometimes called "the 'ecclesia' - - the called-out company, and sometimes the 'koinonia', or the fellowship.¹¹ The latter word, from which our word "communion" comes, suggests the bond of unity which permeated the early groups. "There was one spirit abroad among them, and it was this one spirit that transformed them into a community or group with a life of its own."¹² This organic fellowship of mutually helpful persons had no formal organization. Little groups gathered together in common worship in which each member was expected to make his unique contribution as Paul's words indicate: "When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation."¹³ The basic pattern of most of the early groups was characterized by "the consciousness of Divine invasion, the expectation of the marvelous, the unconcern about the affairs of this life, the experiment to form a society governed from within and guided by ecstatic prophesy."¹⁴

It was this matter of ecstatic prophesy that led in part to a growing formalism in worship and to a more clearly

11. Samuel M. Shoemaker, How You Can Help Other People (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1946), 95.

12. Murray, Group Movements Throughout the Ages, 34.

13. I Corinthians 14:26.

14. Rufus M. Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion (London: Macmillan & Company, Ltd., 1923), 8.

defined church organization. The earliest Christian groups had no official leaders other than those who held influence according to age and spiritual qualifications. The apostles were given prominence as would be expected, but other than serving as inspiration to the local groups they had no special powers. Members of the groups testified freely of their possession of the Holy Spirit, and those who felt especially endowed with insight into spiritual matters exercised the gift of prophecy. With the passage of time, however, the high degree of spiritual insight among the members of the groups waned as the conviction of direct fellowship with Christ decreased. The inspiration of those who were prophesying was questioned and the need for a rational leadership was felt. It is the habit of man to look for organization after a period of inspiration, and the early Christians were no exception.

The development of the clergy and of a body of doctrine can be seen clearly in the observance of the Lord's Supper. In its earliest form the Lord's Supper was the visible bond of spiritual fellowship. It was observed as a common meal and took place around the family table in the home of one of the members. Known as the agape or love feast, it was an occasion of joyous human fellowship which was deepened by a conviction of the presence of the living Christ. With the waning of this consciousness of spirit-

ual fellowship, the Lord's Supper tended to become less of a happy family occasion and more of a formal ritualistic practice. In place of a feeling of a free, personal communication with the Holy Spirit there developed a magical rite in which the real presence of Christ was sought in bread and wine. An official to administer the rite became an essential and so authority came to be vested in selected individuals. The fellowship was being replaced by a church.

The creative fellowship of the early days was lost in the development of an organized church, but for the sake of spreading the Christian ideal more organization was imperative. An intuitive faith was not enough for the propagation of the new truth in a pagan and hostile world and so a body of doctrine was developed. As the missionary efforts of Paul and others carried the new way of life into most of the Mediterranean world a priestly hierarchy developed to bind together the individual local groups. Thus the Christian Church was built and thus it became a great force to be reckoned with in the life of the world, but the spark that had kindled the flame was to be found in the earliest congregations. The early Church had established a pattern to which reformers were to return time after time. The intimate, interacting fellowship of men and women alive with the Spirit of God had been the original source of power in the Church, and it has continued to be down to the

present day. There have always been groups to rise up in protest against growing formalism and secularism. The first of such groups to make effective protest appeared in the middle of the second century under the leadership of Montanus.

Montanism

The Montanist movement was one of the first of a long line of Christian movements in which the basic feature was the desire to establish a more truly Christian community. Feeling that the Church of the second century had strayed far from its original spirit and purpose, the Montanists attempted to re-interpret the Christian faith in the pattern of the earliest Christian groups. Protesting against the increasing prominence being given to the priestly leaders, the Montanists asserted the priesthood of all believers and "undertook to form a Church of saints - a Church which should be in truth the community of the faithful and holy."¹⁵

The originator of this movement was a man named Montanus who came from Phrygia in Asia Minor, a region famed for its ecstatic type of religion. In 156 Montanus proclaimed himself a prophet through whom the Holy Spirit was speaking even as Christ had promised he would in the doc-

¹⁵ Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion, 42.

trine of the Paraclete. With the help of two prophetesses, Prisca and Maximilla, he soon gathered around himself a group of followers and inaugurated the movement known as Montanism. In its basic teachings the movement was both a prophetic plea and an ascetic protest.

With prophetic zeal the Montanists sought to breathe a new spirit into the Church. In place of a growing trend toward an intellectual religion they wanted to substitute a religion of the heart. They declared that the Holy Spirit was still speaking to men through divinely chosen prophets. Revelation was not a thing of the past but was being recognized progressively as Christ had promised.¹⁶ The originators of the movement placed primary stress on the renewal of prophecy calling themselves "the Spiritualists" or "the Spiritual People."¹⁷ "For the inflexible system of form and ritual they substituted the free and spontaneous exercise of spiritual gifts in the church-fellowship, and gifts were to be shared among all the brethren."¹⁸

Reaffirming the early ideal that fellowship in the group meant reference to a united effort in seeking God's will, they rejected the contemporary teaching of the church

16. Cf. John 14:26, 16:13.

17. Cf. Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion, 43.

18. Murray, Group Movements Throughout the Ages, 38.

that stressed obedience to instructions rather than development of life, that emphasized being rather than becoming.

Along with this insistence on the place of prophetic inspiration there was a passion for purity and holiness which stood out in sharp contrast to the growing worldliness of the Church. So convinced were the Montanists of the irreconcilability of Christianity with the pagan secular world that they preached the imminent approach of the end of the world with a great day of judgment. In the town of Pepuza in Phrygia, Montanus gathered a great community of believers together with the goal of severing their connections with the pagan world and of living together in a pure Christian community where they would await the millennium.

The ascetic stress had a wide-spread appeal among many second century Christians and was responsible for a large number of the converts to Montanism. The most famous person to embrace the new teachings was Tertullian in Carthage (about 207) who became its leading exponent. Another aspect of the ascetic ideal was the zeal with which the followers sought a martyr's death. Vivid accounts of martyrdom and of prophetic visions, written by a Montanist and possibly by Tertullian¹⁹ are gathered into a little book called the Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and

19. Cf. Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion, 43.

Felicitas.²⁰ This writing describes the lengths of heroic martyrdom to which the Montanists were willing to go in the name of their faith. It gives a clear picture of the earnestness with which these early Christians sought to realize a Church of the Holy Spirit on earth.

Montanism died out before the vigorous opposition of the established Church. Through its prophecies it had set up new laws at variance with established Church procedure and the excesses of its asceticism as well as of its prophesying made opposition to it inevitable. The movement failed but not before an experiment in ascetic community life had been attempted. The unswerving loyalty of the Montanists to the doctrine of progressive revelation through contemporary prophets brought an emphasis on the real presence of the Holy Spirit into the Church which persecution and martyrdom could not extinguish.

The Rise of Monasticism

A group movement which was destined to play a large role in the history of the Church developed toward the end of the third century under the name of monasticism. In origin, monasticism was a movement of serious-minded laymen who foresaw the downfall of the Church in an ever-increas-

20. Quoted in full by Frederic Palmer, Heretics, Saints, and Martyrs (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 189- 96.

ing secularism and in a rigidly formal type of worship. Voluntary poverty and voluntary celibacy were held at that time to be the highest form of Christian practice and when retirement from the world for meditation was added, the basis for monasticism was laid. Although the monastic ideal was sought after at first in isolation, for practical reasons the individual type gave way to group-centered life.

The individualistic type of asceticism appeared and flourished especially in Egypt and in Syria in the first centuries, but the solitary type gave way gradually to the cenobitic or group-centered type. Not only was it more practical for those seeking solitude to live in communities with others, but it was found that individual development in Christian living develops better "in an organization which provides, besides the training in solitude, the training through friction with other individuals."²¹ Prominent leaders in the early Church such as Jerome and Athanasius advocated such community living, and after Athanasius had introduced monasticism into Italy in about the middle of the fourth century, Augustine and Ambrose added their support to it. During the fourth century monastic groups sprang up throughout all Christendom and the movement continued in various forms throughout the Middle Ages. It

21. Moreno, in a discussion of "The Application of the Group Method to the Classification of Prisoners," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 38.

soon lost its lay character and became largely a clerical institution.

The group life of the monastery provided an example of training through interpersonal relations. Moreno refers to it as a correctional institution as he writes:

The monastery was in its origin an attempt to "improve" society, a sample of a new social order, more characteristic for Christian pioneering than the Church. It was some sort of group healing, one man correcting and inspiring the other, a correctional institution.²²

Although the monastic ideal was an exalted one, because of lack of organized supervision and because of the large numbers of isolated monasteries, each existing under the regulation of self-imposed rules, a chaotic condition developed. It was under the leadership of St. Benedict (c. 480 - c. 542) that the movement was reformed and systematized so that it became an integral part of the life of the Church.

In the rule of St. Benedict some of the finest aspects of monasticism are to be seen. Although the Benedictine rules were strict, they were not impossible, stressing first of all worship and then industry, all carried out under a strict military-like discipline. Benedict's "conception of a monastery was that of a permanent, self-contained and self-supporting garrison of Christ's soldiers."²³

22. Loc. cit.

23. Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), 139.

During the troubled days of the Middle Ages the monastery provided the only place for peace-loving persons. The finest men of the day were found within monastery walls. Trained by living harmoniously in close quarters with others, the monks became the missionaries and pioneers of untold value to all of Europe.

Accustomed to labor, inured to hardship, contemptuous of death, living in caves or birchen huts, with patient and undaunted toil they had widely subdued the savage country, covered with forests, stained with great trails of desert land, sterile with bogs and drowned with swamps, where the elk and the buffalo, the bear and the wolf, were not so fierce as the savage men who roamed and fought beneath the shades. More than once the monastery had become the nucleus of the city.²⁴

In the twelfth century, under the leadership of Bernard of Clairvaux, the influence of the monastery was second to none in the secular and religious world. Bernard (1090-1153) lived at a time when the ecclesiastical forces were the dominating authority in Europe, and under his inspiring genius it was the monastery that guided ecclesiastical life. At twenty-two years of age Bernard had persuaded a group of about thirty friends and companions to join him in preparing themselves to enter the monastic life. His persuasive eloquence which was later to guide decisions of priest and prince alike was apparent even in those early years. Led by Bernard, this little group sought admission to the strict

24. Richard S. Storrs, Bernard of Clairvaux (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), 215.

monastery at Citeaux. A year later, after making his final confession as a monk, Bernard set out at the head of twelve other monks to found a new monastery. From the beginning, his religious life was bound up with a group. These twelve, representing the twelve Apostles, following Bernard who led in the place of Christ, established the new monastery at Clairvaux. The rule of Benedict was strictly observed and formed the basis of life at Clairvaux. In a democratic fashion, as was the common practice, the monks elected Bernard as their abbot and were thenceforth bound to give respect and immediate obedience to him. All distinctions from the secular world were set aside so that prince and ploughman worked and worshipped as equals. No personal property was permitted, routine work was assigned in turn, offences were dealt with summarily. Regulations required: "...no sensuality, no idle or jesting words, humility, patience under injuries, contentment with meanest goods or employments, constancy in religious service, regularity in labor."²⁵ Bernard demanded ascetic severity in the way of life of his monks but insisted that the goal of such living was a closer approach to God. He understood the convent as the place where men could "climb with others the steep path of celestial virtue."²⁶ He

25. Storrs, Bernard of Clairvaux, 229.

26. Ibid., 214.

was insistent on the development of Christ-like character among the monks in their intimate associations. "If there be in us a scornful, pharisaic pride toward other men, and we despise others better than ourselves, what will economy and severity in our own way of life profit us?"²⁷ Under Bernard's strict but kindly direction the monastery at Clairvaux expanded greatly in numbers and in importance. From Clairvaux and the 800 abbeys connected with it there poured out into the secular world a steady stream of influence. The monks busied themselves in literary pursuits, in agriculture, in charitable works, in medical aid including the treatment of insanity, in reclaiming criminals and in missionary efforts at home and abroad. It represented the monastic movement at its height of influence, a movement which exhibited at its best "what the life of the group could accomplish for the glory of God and for the service of men."²⁸

3. THE MEDIEVAL ERA

The Waldenses

While Clairvaux was making its distinctive contribution to the life of the Church through its monastic organiza-

²⁷. Bernard, as quoted by Storrs, Bernard of Clairvaux, 232.

²⁸. Murray, Group Movements Throughout the Ages, 71.

tion in the twelfth century, another movement came into being which stressed the need for less solitary devotion and for more practical service. The originator of the movement was a wealthy merchant of Lyons named Peter Waldo who experienced a religious crisis about 1173 which set him out on a unique spiritual experiment. After hearing a wandering minstrel tell of the sacrifices of St. Alexis, ending with a complaint of the degenerate condition of the Church, Waldo became so interested in the spiritual life that he sought advice on how to find the true way to heaven. When the advice was given in the scriptural words: "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all thou hast and give to the poor and come and follow me,"²⁹ he took the words literally and began at once to dispose of his great possessions through serving the poor. His efforts at following Christ literally made a great impression on his friends. By 1177 there had gathered around him a considerable group calling themselves the "poor of Christ" or "the poor men of Lyons" who became known in history as the Waldenses. They were simple and obscure people, largely forgotten by the Church, who undertook to live out the New Testament teachings to the letter. Through lay preaching in market places and through door to door visitations they sought to interpret

29. Matthew 19:21.

the Christian message in clear, non-ecclesiastical terms. Translating the Gospels into the vernacular, they read the stories of Jesus to the people as they visited the sick and helped the poor. They were characterized by warmth of love and human brotherhood.

Since the group originated in protest against the practices of the clergy, it is no wonder that the Church opposed it from the start. Corruption in the Church, best seen in the practice of the selling of indulgences, was preached against steadily by the Waldenses and by challenging the unique privilege of the priest to grant absolution just because of ordination, they threatened the very foundation of the historic Church. Spiritual power, they insisted, was dependent on inward life and character, not on ordination. Although they had hoped to reform the Church from within they were expelled from it and were thus forced to form a separate sect. At the time of the Reformation they became fully Protestant. They are of particular significance as the only medieval sect which still survives today, even though greatly modified.

Had the Waldensian movement originated a century later it might have been incorporated within the Franciscan framework for both movements sought a more ethical and a more social type of religion. As it is, the Waldenses in their centuries of existence tell the story of a heroic endurance of persecution that was made possible by the close-

ly knit fellowship of its members.

The Franciscans

The impact of monasticism on the life of the times has already been noted. The earliest monastic ideal had been one of retirement in solitude, but increasingly the need for more active contribution to the on-going life of the world was noted. The Waldenses had stressed the social aspect of religion, and the mendicant orders of the thirteenth century, working within the monastic system, gave further impetus to the stress of serving humanity. The missionary group of Franciscans and the educational group of Dominicans brought the monks from the cloisters into the homes of the people and especially to the people in the cities. To the monastic ideals of chastity, poverty, and obedience was added the goal of service to the world.

The Franciscans are the best example of the mendicants and are of especial interest because of the large part played in their development by small groups. St. Francis, who had given up a life of ease and prosperity to serve his Lord in absolute poverty, conceived of his work as being an exact imitation of the work of Christ. He thought of the members of his order as groups of apostolic men living and preaching as the band of Disciples

had long before. Although the movement rapidly reached such large numbers that such an ideal became impractical, nevertheless in the early organization of Franciscan groups there was a warmth of fellowship and an interaction among members that calls to mind the earliest Jerusalem congregation. The key note of their lives was simplicity and complete renunciation. "Having naught within them or without that could in any wise make them sad, they rejoiced in the Lord continually."³⁰

The greatest influence of the Franciscans on the secular world came through the Third Order. In addition to the friars of the First Order there were nuns known as the "Poor Clares" of the Second Order and a Third Order for lay people who carried on their customary daily work and in addition, by undertaking various religious duties, were bound to each other and to the Church. Through the lay order countless numbers were brought back to a religious life and a virtual revival of a deeply Christian spirit among the middle and poorer classes resulted. This spiritual revival was not confined, however, to the poorer classes but permeated all of society with a democratic message that became one of the causes for the breakdown of the feudal system. A story recorded in the Little Flowers of

30. Quoted by Murray, Group Movements Throughout the Ages, 92. Source not given.

St. Francis catches the group spirit that bound prince with pauper. Friar Giles, famed for his holiness, was once visited by St. Louis, King of France, who was disguised as a poor pilgrim. Giles recognized him, but they greeted each other in silence and knelt together in a loving embrace. The king left without either of them having uttered a word. On learning who the visitor had been, the brothers reproached Giles for his silence, but Giles simply answered that he had read the King's heart and the King had read his. No spoken word had been needed.³¹

St. Francis was never a good organizer and so even though fifty years after the founding of the movement in 1209 there were over 200,000 members and some 8,000 houses,³² the movement died out. He had the unique ability to gather men and women together into groups and to set them on fire with a missionary zeal, but he never learned how to unite the groups successfully. Nevertheless, the movement left its unique mark on the world as group after group of Franciscans of all three orders found in their leader a living testimony to the possibility of living a Christ-like life.

The Friends of God

31. Cf. Francis of Assisi, The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi, Chapter 33, James Rhoades, translator (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1904), 193- 94.

32. Cf. George B. Cutten, The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 149.

The gloom of the Middle Ages was never darker than in the fourteenth century, but even in the darkness there were rays of light shining out from religious groups known as the Friends of God. Just as the Franciscan movement had helped to make Christianity once again a lay religion, these new religious groups were formed largely among laymen in response to very real needs. In 1314, both Louis, Duke of Bavaria, and Frederick, Duke of Austria, were elected emperor. Since obviously there could not be two heads to the Holy Roman Empire, the papacy decided the issue by choosing Frederick and excommunicating Louis. The result of this act was the laying of an interdict upon all the cities that recognized Louis, so that for 16 years in a large portion of Europe there were no public religious services and the doors of the cathedrals and churches were closed. To make the state of affairs even more tragic, the papacy was taken captive and moved from Rome to Avignon where the papal seat remained from 1309 to 1377. When the Black Death broke out in 1347, raged for two years, and then returned in 1358, 1363 and 1376, the people lost all heart. The ambiguity of rival popes in 1378 added to their confusion and uncertainty. In an age dominated by the medieval Church, the Church failed notably to meet the needs of men.

It was during the years of the interdict that people in southwestern Germany and Switzerland began to gather to-

gether in little groups in their homes for common worship and for moral support. With public fellowship denied they turned more than ever to the meeting of common needs in intimate groups. Within the little groups the creative interaction that had been known first among the Disciples and then among the early Christian congregations made its appearance again. People from all walks of life joined in the common search for a fuller knowledge of God and a deeper awareness of the working of the Holy Spirit. Each felt himself to be inspired by God, but they claimed no unique knowledge and sought to verify their inspiration by comparing it and modifying it along with that of others of the group.³³

The members of these informal groups called themselves "Friends of God." There was little formal organization in each group and only very loose ties between groups. Itinerant preachers called "prophets" provided a certain unity in the movement and the production and circulation of some excellent mystical literature served a purpose similar to that performed by the early Pauline Epistles in binding local groups together. The names of some of the leaders have come down through history: Rulman Nerswin, Nikolaus von Lowen, John Tauler, Henry Suso, Jan Ruysbrock, Margar-

33. Cf. Murray, Group Movements Throughout the Ages, 134.

et and Christina Ebner, Henry of Nordlingen; for the most part, however, the Friends of God were simple folk with a spiritual hunger that could be satisfied only in fellowship with other hungering persons. They neither cared for nor sought after fame.

The Friends of God are significant not only because of the creative fellowship which they sponsored among themselves but also because of their influence on their times. As a distinctly laymen's movement they made it quite clear that a vital spiritual life is entirely possible without the mediation of the Church. They indicated, too, that the Church and its ministry could be purified by unordained men. They never did go so far as to revolt against the Church and so were never truly Protestant in spirit, but they helped to lay some of the foundations for the Reformation. Martin Luther's discovery of the secret of living by faith came after he had been influenced by the writings of the Friends of God, in particular the sermons of John Tauler, as Rufus Jones shows:

We are now able, I believe, to establish beyond debate or controversy that his study of the mystics marks the turning point of his life and actually swung him from the straight path of a medieval monk to the incalculable curve of a dynamic reformer.³⁴

These groups never left the Church but constantly

³⁴. Some Exponents of Mystical Religion (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1930), 124.

strove to be a leaven for the Church. In their common effort at revitalizing the faith of their day they undergirded each other and sought to draw others into the joy that they knew. They were impractical and unworldly in the eyes of the secular man, yet their piety in the tradition of Meister Eckhart, was practical as well as spiritual. Like St. Francis they sought to live in eternity without ever forgetting that they were present in time. Spiritual contemplation led to practical ministry so that untutored and unordained laymen set high standards for pastoral service.

The Brethren of the Common Life

The Friends of God were representative of mystical groups that flourished during the dark days of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and their influence extended widely throughout the continent. One of the most significant groups that became the successor of this mystical brotherhood was known as "the New Devotion" or "Brethren of the Common Life." This group developed in the Netherlands as the outgrowth of a union of followers of Gerhard Groot, a brilliant scholar and influential preacher who had been a close friend of Ruysbroeck.

Gerhard Groot was a lay evangelist whose life was turned from a successful career as a secular university professor into the service of religion by his contacts with the

mystical emphasis of the Friends of God. With the utmost eloquence he preached a simple gospel message to the people of his day, calling them to a religion of following Christ. His preaching met with amazing success due in part at least to the conviction with which he spoke and to the simple directness of his message. Diagnosing with embarrassing clarity the diseases of the Church, Groot accomplished a significant single-handed reform until the sharpness of his criticism reached the ears of Church leaders. When the ecclesiastical authorities felt the sting of his message, they revoked his permit to preach, thus inadvertently directing him into even more significant work.

Groot's preaching over a five year period had resulted in the formation in the cities where he had labored of groups of young men who sought to lead a more deeply spiritual life. These neophyte groups were eager for direction and were seeking for some movement to which they could devote their energies. When Groot's preaching was brought to an end he seized upon the opportunity to organize these groups around educational goals, gathering bands together into communities with the purpose of copying manuscripts and of producing literature. The first community, patterned after the primitive Church as recorded in Acts, was formed at Deventer, and other communities referred to as "brother-houses" or "sister-houses" rapidly sprang up throughout Holland and Germany.

The Brethren of the Common Life lived a monastic type of life but took no permanent vows and mingled freely in the secular world. Their emphasis was not on contemplation but was on practice. From the movement there developed an educational emphasis which led to a great program of instruction among the common people and especially among children. These groups of devout men and women did much toward promoting a popular piety throughout the Netherlands and Germany and aided in creating a deeper appreciation of the real place and meaning of religion. One of their writings, Thomas a Kempis's (c. 1380-1471) Of the Imitation of Christ,³⁵ has been spoken of as being second only to the Bible in its influence on Christendom.³⁶

4. THE MODERN ERA

German Pietism

What the Friends of God had done for the Roman Catholic Church in the fourteenth century the German Pietists did for Protestantism at the end of the seventeenth century. The external dogmatism of the Catholic Church against which Luther had revolted in the protest that led to Protestantism began to make its appearance in an equally stringent form in

35. Thomas a Kempis, Of the Imitation of Christ, John Payne, translator (New Bedford, Mass.: Abraham Shearman, Jun., 1802).

36. Cf. Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion, 321.

the Lutheran Church. The laity was expected to accept the dogmas of the Church passively and uncritically, and religious living in both its personal and social sense was generally disregarded. It was the age of "dead orthodoxy."³⁷

Pietism was a vigorous protest against these tendencies. Protesting against formalism, the Pietists asserted the primacy of a religion of the heart and insisted on the responsibility of the layman in active Christian service. The first goal was a deepening of individual spiritual life and toward this end little groups of sincere laymen gathered together for prayer and reading of the Bible and discussions. These groups, which were given the name collegia pietatis (hence Pietism), were started by the chief Lutheran pastor of Frankfort, Philipp Spener, in his own home. They were the first of a large number of groups that formed within church congregations with the purpose of revitalizing the life of the local church through an experimental knowledge of religion. In a spirit of mutual helpfulness they sought a richer religious experience for themselves and for each other. These gatherings were conducted as prayer-meetings under lay leadership and although they instituted considerable reform in the church, for the most part they did not separate from the church. In protest against the

37. Cf. Walker, A History of the Christian Church, 496, for a discussion of this term.

general laxity in morals of the day, they showed ascetic tendencies in rejecting the theater, dances, and card playing and in advocating moderation in food, drink and dress.

The movement spread throughout middle and north Germany, and under the leadership of Spener and then of August Francke took roots in the growing university center at Halle. Opposition to it was vigorous and violent and indeed in some cases justified as occasional groups tended toward extravagant excesses. An intolerant attitude toward non-Pietists, an insistence on conscious conversion as the normal way into the kingdom of God, and an over-emphasis on asceticism were among its dangers. Its main weakness as a movement was the total lack of central organization which allowed each individual Pietist group to go its own way. Its strength lay in the significant contribution that it made through its individual groups in restoring a truer conception of religion to Protestant Germany. The Pietists awakened a new interest in the study of the Scriptures and in the training of children. They stimulated an awareness of missionary obligations and generally improved the spiritual quality of the ministry.

The Anabaptists

The role played by creative fellowship groups in the life of the church becomes increasingly difficult to trace

in Post-Reformation days, for the creation of new Protestant denominations has been preceded almost without exception by the development of such groups. This was true in the case of the followers of the movement called the "Anabaptists." The Reformation with its rediscovery of the Bible and its cleavage from the spiritually bankrupt traditional Church gave new impetus to many groups which were not incorporated into the churches of Luther or Zwingli. At the dawn of the Reformation there already existed in nearly all Christian countries little groups of men and women who were striving to recall the church to a faith and practice more nearly like that of the early Christian community. The stand taken by Luther and Zwingli awakened new hope and interest in the yearning hearts of members of these groups and revived their hopes for a society free from all tyranny, but in the development of the Reformation it soon became apparent that the new reformed churches were little freer than the system which they had sought to overthrow. There developed, therefore, a radical wing of the reform movement, a group that began to insist on the building of a new church based on the Bible rather than merely on a reform of the old. The new church would be a congregation of believers all of whom had had an experience of religion. It would be a church freed completely from all secular alliances and would have as its sole pur-

pose the realization of God's kingdom on earth.

Members of the radical group soon sought fellowship together in their homes to study the Bible and to clarify their stand. "They were men...of marked purity of life, of deep sincerity and simplicity, and they were ready to follow the light as soon as it broke upon them."³⁸ In their study of the Scriptures they found no basis for infant baptism. Interpreting the practice, then, as plain superstition, the very essence of sacerdotalism, they determined to abolish it. Their insistence on baptism only after deliberate choice as an evidence of a desire to be in a living relationship with Christ brought a flood of opposition. Continuing to meet in groups, however, the radicals maintained their position with tenacity and implemented their theological thinking with a passionate social interest. Called Anabaptists, i. e. re-baptists, by their enemies, they effected complete separation from the more moderate reform group in 1525. Anabaptist groups were to continue from that day to the present to be the instigators of a new order in which freedom of conscience and a free church have been cardinal points of emphasis.

The Society of Friends

In England as well as on the continent the effect of

38. Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion, 375.

creative group life in religious circles was keenly felt. One of the most significant religious movements centering around group experience is found in the Society of Friends, more commonly known as the Quakers. Not only did group fellowship form the basis of the early beginning of the movement in the seventeenth century, but the same sort of group activity, penetrated by the living Spirit of Christ, exists even in the present day. The whole history of the Quakers is the story of earnest seekers after the light who have waited upon the Lord in the silent fellowship of intimate groups and then have sought to walk in the light through sacrificial service.

The founder of the Society of Friends was George Fox, a young Englishman who became disheartened by the life of those who professed to be Christians and so sought for a deeper type of religious reality. His earnest searching led to a high moment when in 1646 the revelation came to him that "Christianity is not an outward profession, but an inner light by which Christ directly illuminates the believing soul."³⁹ This inner light is not dependent on preaching or Bible reading but comes directly to all who are true disciples. Thus formal worship, sacramental practices, and a regular ministry were considered as non-essentials by the

39. Walker, A History of the Christian Church, 479.

Quakers. Group fellowship and worship in which no ritual or prescribed form was used but in which spiritual communion was carried on in silence was the basis of the new movement, and although other meetings for teaching and evangelistic purposes now are added, the sacramental silence of waiting together for inspiration remains at the heart of the movement. This striving together after an inward way to God, with free opportunity for testifying about the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recalls the experience of primitive Christianity. One of the early Quaker historians, Robert Barclay, tells of how his life was affected through identification with the silent worshipping group.

...When I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them, which touched my heart, and as I gave way to it I found the evil weakening in me and the good raised up....and indeed this is the surest way to become a Christian.⁴⁰

Up to the very present the emphasis of the Quakers has been upon personal and especially group intercourse with God rather than on institutional strength. Worship has been conceived of as a corporate matter in which each person helps everyone else. Members of the worshipping group are said to be "like a great heap of burning coals, warming one another, as a great strength, freshness and vigor

40. Quoted by Shoemaker, How You Can Help Other People, 89, from Vulliamy, William Penn, 126-27.

of life flows into all."⁴¹ At the same time, the Quakers have avoided the dangers of other mystical groups by insisting that the presence of Christ in their lives is reflected best through their walking in the light. Scarcely any other group in the history of Christianity can point to higher standards of sacrificial living than those exhibited by the Quakers as they have served humanity with international recognition.

Methodism

The creative power of the interacting group finds one of its most vivid demonstrations in the Wesleyan revival that resulted in Methodism. Early eighteenth century England was a hot bed of social, political, and religious unrest. Increased prosperity in trade and commerce had led to the concentration of population in industrial centers where poverty and passion were the ruling forces. The unconcern of the small upper economic class for the laborer was a reflection of the self-centered autocracy which characterized both church and state. The church simply existed in cold formalism, making scarcely any impact on the life of the whole nation. It was a glacial

⁴¹. Isaac Pennington, quoted by Jones, The Vital Cell (Philadelphia: Book Committee, Religious Society of Friends, 1941), 10.

epoch in the life of England.⁴² Into this austere age came the Wesleyan revival, a movement that was to awaken the slumbering passions of the lower classes and to direct them with a great purifying force into socially productive channels, regenerating all walks of national life.

The Wesleyan revival stands in the shadow of John Wesley. It was his personality that dominated the movement and it was his genius that provided the organization which has made possible a recognition of the whole world as Methodism's parish. John Wesley was essentially a socially-minded person who constantly sought companionship with like-minded people. He loved the family circle, not only in his own boyhood days, but throughout all of his life. He kept a voluminous diary and "from the days of earliest written record it is a story of fellowship."⁴³ While teaching as a Fellow at Lincoln College, Oxford, Wesley became the leader (1729) of fellow students who were organized into a club for the purpose of mutual spiritual help. Apparently he was following the suggestion of a friend who advised him of the value of Christian fellowship in these words: "Sir, you wish to serve God and go to heaven? Remember that you cannot serve Him alone. You

42. Cf. Frederick M. Davenport, Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1905), 136.

43. The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., Nehemiah Curnoch, editor (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1909), I, 19.

must therefore find companions or make them; the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion."⁴⁴ This organization was known as the "Holy Club" although Wesley refers to it in his manuscript by the more intimate name of "Our Company."⁴⁵ Because of the meticulous methods of religious observances followed by the group they became known as "Methodists." The derision with which the customs of the Holy Club were met helped to indicate to Wesley the need for strong ties of group loyalty and prepared some of the ground for his later successful organization of groups.

It is significant that Wesley's conversion experience took place in a social setting. It was in a time of discouragement after his return from a disheartening experience as a missionary to America that Wesley went to a meeting of the Aldersgate Street Society, where he felt his heart strangely warmed.⁴⁶ This society was one of a considerable number of independent groups which were trying on a small scale to cultivate a warmer religious life within the established church. Since it was in one of these Societies that Wesley had really found peace in his own heart and power for his preaching, it was only natural that

44. Quoted by Henry Moore, The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. (New York: N. Bangs & J. Emory, 1824), I, 137. Source not given.

45. Cf. The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., I, 19.

46. May 24, 1738. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 476.

he should preach in other similar groups. Moreover, the enthusiasm which he felt and with which he began preaching was looked down upon by the Anglican Church and many church pulpits were closed to him. Led by the example of one of the former members of the Oxford Holy Club, George Whitefield, Wesley began to preach in the open among coal miners in Bristol. His success as a field preacher became immediately apparent.

The enthusiastic reception given by large out of doors congregations to his message, however, never blinded Wesley to the need for intimate fellowship. It was in organizing his followers into workable groups that his genius was fully realized. Taking up the form of the existing societies, he founded a new group in Bristol and began the erection of a chapel there in May, 1739. Throughout all of his life Wesley had no intention of breaking from the Church of England; he simply wanted to make better provision for the mutual cultivation of the Christian life. Wesley's unique contribution to the society idea was in the division of each society into classes of twelve to fifteen persons. The idea itself was not new since the existing religious societies had been divided into small groups or "bands" and the sect known as Moravians had used the small group idea, but with Wesley the class meeting assumed new stature and importance.

The class meeting became the heart of Methodism. Religion was taken from the cold pulpit and became a warm and living thing in the hearts of the class members. Lay leaders were appointed for each class with responsibility at first for collecting a weekly penny from each member and then later for spiritual oversight. Religion and finance were thus wedded. Religious instruction centered in the class, so that new converts were not only taught but were given strong moral support by older members. Robert H. Murray, in referring to the class meeting, puts it this way: "It has provided a furnace in which the raw material has been fused till it could take the Methodist stamp."⁴⁷ The class provided the place for the nurture of practical religious living in contrast to the emotionalism often exhibited during preaching services. Some of the physical manifestations found in large preaching services were typical of those seen in any revival age and included "trembling, screaming, and weeping, but principally of falling to the ground and suffering excruciating pain."⁴⁸ Wesley, however, discouraged such emotional display, especially in his later life, and stressed the need for practical evidence of spirituality. As an aid in practical

47. Group Movements Throughout the Ages, 263.

48. Cutten, The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity, 178.

Christian living, certificates of membership known as "class tickets" were issued to members in good standing, and the class leader was given the responsibility for granting or withholding the tickets each quarter year. The tickets led to constant spiritual and ethical oversight and provided a convenient means for a periodic sifting of the membership.

The common bond in the class meetings and indeed in the Methodist societies was the personal experience of an immediate sense of the presence of God. The class stressed the availability of this experience of God for everyone. One of Wesley's correspondents writes:

We find great power from the Lord in our own private bands, the Love of God shed abroad in our hearts, our souls knit to one another, we drink of one spirit and our Lord doth meet us, and that It is no wonder we are Loth to part for we think four hours too little time for so heavenly a communion.⁴⁹

It was common practice for members to testify freely of their "experience" and to call on new members to do the same. This emotional experience, however, was only the beginning of the Methodist way, for there was a strong moral emphasis based on a New Testament ethic as applied to the contemporary society. Moral qualities particularly needed in those days were stressed: "reverence, sobriety, peaceable

⁴⁹. Manuscript letter from Margaret Summirell to John Wesley, July 23, 1740, quoted by Sydney G. Dimond, Psychology of the Methodist Revival (London: Humphrey Milford, 1926), 212-13.

tempers, honesty, particularly commercial honesty, self-control and self-denial, diligence and frugality, and loyalty to the group."⁵⁰ Here was a vivid example of the impact of an interacting group in modifying behavior, for the new members quickly discovered the scorn with which the societies looked upon the low moral standards of the day and felt impelled by the irresistible force of opinion in the group to measure up to the higher ideal.

From the beginning Wesley saw the power of the class meeting and of the societies for providing mutual support in the efforts at more Christ-like living. He defined a society as follows:

A company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.⁵¹

This sort of group fellowship which stressed mutual help was almost totally unknown in the church of the day. Moreover, the developments of new industrial and mining areas with the resulting shifting of populations had destroyed most of the group ties of the people and had created a real need for the very sort of fellowship that Wesley pro-

50. Dimond, *ibid.*, 216.

51. Rule 2 of the first Rules of the United Societies by John and Charles Wesley, published in 1743. For a list of the Rules cf. W. J. Townsend, editor, A New History of Methodism (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1909), II, 563.

posed.⁵² The Methodists discovered for themselves the unique satisfactions that develop out of a group consciousness. McDougall summarizes the point clearly:

...The consciousness of the group and of oneself as a member of it brings a sense of power and security, an assurance of sympathy and co-operation, a moral and physical support without which man can hardly face the world.⁵³

The societies stimulated the sense of group consciousness through the class-meetings, the common worship with enthusiastic hymn singing, the introduction of Holy Communion, and the use of the class-ticket. Moreover, the result of the creative interaction within the societies was the development of a body of Methodist doctrine which grew out of the deliberative discussions of the groups. Methodist doctrine met the religious needs of the day because it grew out of the best reflective thinking of its members. The intellectual level of societies was progressively raised as each member subordinated his opinions to those of the entire group. Through such a process the collective life of Methodism was raised far above the average level of the social life of the masses, and from Methodism a leavening influence spread into all of society.

The continuing influence of the Methodist societies

52. Cf. Dimond, The Psychology of the Methodist Revival, 212.

53. The Group Mind, 96.

was strengthened by close organizational ties. In addition to the class leaders charged with spiritual and financial oversight there were other lay leaders in the local societies who were responsible for the care of property, for teaching, and for visiting the sick. Local preachers (laymen) conducted regular preaching services under the supervision of travelling preachers (ordained men) who in turn worked under district superintendents. Through this organization the influence of Methodism radiated out into ever widening circles. Moreover, the group experience and the organizational practice prepared the Methodists for active and constructive service in wider areas of social life. The labor movement as it gained momentum in English life was leavened and purified by Methodists. "The local preacher and the labor leader became for a long period almost synonymous terms."⁵⁴

The impact of Methodism on the eighteenth century can scarcely be over-exaggerated. 511 preachers, 120,000 members, and 500,000 adherents tell the statistical story in 1790,⁵⁵ but the influence was far greater than these numbers indicate. By developing strong interests in resident laymen and by organizing intimate bands of fellowship, the

⁵⁴. Davenport, Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals, 177.

⁵⁵. Cf. Cutten, The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity, 179.

message of Methodism took a firm hold in the life of the people.

Scores of thousands of men all over the nation were bound together by the bonds of sympathy and brotherhood, not only for their own class, but, in a measure, for every class.⁵⁶

The movement inaugurated by Wesley "presents the aspect... of a great purifying social force working steadily for the evolution and regeneration of society."⁵⁷

The Evangelical Revivals

The Methodist Revival in England reflected the spirit of revivalism that dominated religious life in America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, Wesley had read of the American movement and was undoubtedly somewhat influenced by it.⁵⁸ Just as under Wesley the Methodist Societies arose in answer to the social and religious needs of the masses, so under the leadership of evangelists in America religion took the form that met people at their point of need. Americans up to within a generation of the present day have been people in motion⁵⁹ and in

56. Davenport, Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals, 177.

57. Ibid., 178-79.

58. Cf. Ibid., 133.

59. Cf. William W. Sweet, Revivalism in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), xi.

such a society a rugged individualism inevitably results. An individualistic society calls for personal, individual decisions, in religion as well as in all other aspects of life. Revivalism is mass evangelism in which the appeal is for an individual conversion growing out of a personal decision. The group is significant only as it stimulates this personal decision.

In a sense, then, the revival period in America is of a different character from the other group activities already considered in the history of the church. Because the revival meetings were more like crowds than like deliberate groups, the basic dynamic was interstimulation rather than creative interaction. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study the revival age is significant. It was a group effort at re-establishing personal piety in place of outward conformity. It was individual religion fostered in a social setting, and although the appeal was always to the individual the results of the revivals had far reaching effects. Indeed, some of the group experience in the church of the present day had its origin in the revival age.

The story of the colonizing of America is the story, in part at least, of the adventuring of religious groups from the Old World in search of religious freedom in the new. Such groups, for example, were the Puritans who founded Boston and the Pilgrims who settled at Plymouth. The part

played by the church, however, in early Colonial life was largely insignificant. For the masses of the people the church didn't even exist. It was a luxury for the aristocracy and made little impact on the life of the common man.⁶⁰ The cold formalism of church worship as it was carried over from the Old World made little appeal to men and women striving to forge out a new existence in the wilderness of the new land. Material interests came first, and spiritual and moral concerns took a second place.

Just as Pietism had brought new life to religion in Germany, and Methodism had transformed the religious scene in England, so the revivals revitalized religion for America. In the "Great Awakening" (1734-1750) beginning in New England under Jonathan Edwards and extending throughout the Colonies to Georgia under George Whitefield (a former member of Wesley's Holy Club at Oxford), a new, vital, personal religion was introduced with great success. It was a message of personal salvation centering around a sudden conversion experience as the normal way of entering the Christian life. Of particular interest for this study is the impetus that was given to a "general diffusion to the.. congregational view of the church as a company of experiential Christians."⁶¹

60. Cf. Sweet, Revivalism in America, 23.

61. Walker, A History of the Christian Church, 570.

The second revival period in America, known as the Great Revival (1796-1805), exhibited the greatest extremes in emotionalism. Characteristic of this period were the camp meetings in 1800 in Kentucky where people gathered from great distances at a common meeting ground and camped out for nearly a week, giving themselves without reservation to the search for personal religion. Arthur W. Nagler describes the scene in these words:

Meetings sometimes lasted all night, attended with confusion, uproar, and continual action, as three or four ministers preached simultaneously in different sections, while people shouted, prayed, sang, and gave themselves to or were unwillingly attacked by the strangest physical exercises. These assumed various forms, such as falling in a faint or agony "like men slain in battle," the "jerks," or violent shaking of one member or all parts of the body, rhythmic dancing, barking, jumping, and incoherent jargon.⁶²

It was at this period that the religious and moral conditions of the country reached the lowest point in American history,⁶³ and it was to meet the low ebb of morality in frontier life that the Great Revival came into being. The social atmosphere of the camp meeting and the direct emotional appeal of the evangelists met the needs of the pioneer people who were battling their way through the wilderness as they forged a new country. As the movement spread into the more settled regions in the East it lost its most

62. The Church in History (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1929), 243.

63. Cf. Sweet, Revivalism in America, 117.

bizarre features, became more emotionally controlled, and gave more place to Christian nurture and to practical Christianity. Out of the Great Revival came productive elements of the greatest significance. Educational institutions were given a spiritual turn, missionary projects were strengthened, Sunday Schools were introduced, and the mid-week prayer meeting had its inception.

Other periods of revival followed and continued intermittently throughout the nineteenth century. Most notable among the leaders were Charles G. Finney and Dwight L. Moody. With the passing of the romantic period of the frontier, the dramatic day of mass evangelism disappeared; its influence, however, did not cease. The new life that was felt in religion was felt in all fields of endeavor. Sweet stresses this fact as he says:

Perhaps the chief significance of Charles G. Finney lies not so much in the fact that he was the instrument in adding tens of thousands to the active ranks of the American churches, as in the circumstances that these new converts became active participants in every forward movement of their time.⁶⁴

Christian Communities

Revivalism in America was in part responsible for the development of a new emphasis which reached proportions of national significance in the nineteenth century - the

64. Revivalism in America, 160.

creation of separate Christian communities. Some such communities had their roots in the old world from which members had migrated in the search for religious freedom, but others were the direct outgrowth of the revival emphasis. In the case of each group, communistic principles were so intertwined with religious ideals that it is difficult if not impossible to separate the one from the other. There is good authority, however, for the introduction of communism of property into religious community, for the earliest record of Christian group life records how the conversion of the heart at Pentacost led to the sharing of all material things in common. John Noyes shows how the religious and economic interests are inevitably linked together:

The Revivalists had for their great idea the regeneration of the soul. The great idea of the Socialists was the regeneration of society, which is the soul's environment. These ideas belong together and are complements of each other. Neither can be successfully embodied by men whose minds are not wide enough to accept them both.⁶⁵

The most successful communistic societies in the United States, generally speaking, have been religious rather than secular in nature.⁶⁶ Noyes, after a thorough study of

65. John H. Noyes, History of American Socialisms (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Company, 1870), 26.

66. Cf. H. Bruce Taylor, "Communistic Societies in America," Hastings, editor, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, III, 780.

American Socialisms, designates "religious principle and previous acquaintance of the members"⁶⁷ as the two most essential requisites for the formation of successful Communities. Two societies that have been outstandingly successful and yet are representative of the 19th century trend will be presented briefly. The first of these is of American and the second of European background.

Oneida

The Oneida Community, famous for its experimentation in communal living, was one of the most successful groups to develop from roots in American revivalism. The period of the great revivals in America had made clear the need for more sustained contact with converts if favorable results were to be obtained. Protracted meetings were tried, but at best they were only half-way measures. Noyes points out that what was needed was "to convert...churches into unitary families, and put them into unitary homes, where daily meetings and continuous criticism are possible."⁶⁸ To achieve such a goal a religious organization living in a communal plan established itself in 1847 at Oneida, in New York State. The leader of the community was John Hum-

67. History of American Socialisms, 57.

68. Ibid., 27.

phrey Noyes who had felt the call to the ministry under the influence of the great revivalist Finney and after some years of study had gathered a group of relatives and friends around a little chapel in Putney, Vermont, (1842). The unique religious doctrine was that the Second Coming of Christ had been fulfilled, that Salvation from Sin was as a consequence an actual fact, that a person could live free from sin - that is, he could be perfect. This doctrine, known as Perfectionism, led John Noyes and his followers to seek a life of Holiness. A creative religious fellowship was established at Putney which became the basis for the later life at Oneida. Two or three times during the week religious services called "family meetings" were held which included Bible study, testimonies, and mutual criticism. Within the warm ties of unselfish brotherhood the members subjected themselves to a close scrutiny in which one's general character, manners, and social and spiritual state were given careful consideration. One of the group members remarked that "a good margin was always left for praise, and the kind, impersonal way in which the criticisms were given caused but temporary soreness."⁶⁹

The insistence of Noyes and his followers that the

69. Quoted by William A. Hinds, American Communities and Co-operative Colonies (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company, 1908), 176. Source not given.

kingdom of God had already come and was being realized in the Putney group was too much for the established churches to accept, and when pressure from the churches was intensified by legal complications growing out of experiments in communistic living, the group was forced to leave Vermont and so sought refuge farther west in Oneida where early Perfectionists had settled after indoctrination at Putney.

From the start, the Oneida Community was a religious fellowship striving to lead a holier type of life than was possible in secular society. A "heavenly association" was their goal and their concept of such a way of life impelled them to a renunciation of any exclusive claims to private property. Thus a thoroughly communistic society arose, a communism that even included marriage (called "complex marriage"). The monogamous standard was thought to be inconsistent with the way of life in which all "mine" and "thine" references were to be removed. The Perfectionists were quick to point out the difference between their standards and "free love." They had simply expanded the family concept, with its sacred loyalties and its strong ties of affection, to include the whole community. There was no permanent marriage, but careful regulations prevented license in marital relations. Women were considered to be emancipated both from domination by men and from slavery in the household. Children were accepted as the common re-

sponsibility of the community and were provided for through carefully planned nurseries and schools. Gradually industries were developed and after the first ten years of struggle the community became quite prosperous, due in part to the manufacture of the Oneida trap. True to the communistic ideal, all contributions to the life of the community, whether in manual labor or in professional skill, were deemed of equal value.

The principle of mutual criticism continued to be at the heart of the religious fellowship and was extended into the organizational life of the community. Indeed, it became the principal means of discipline and government, and this fostered a creative interpersonal interaction that meant not only self-improvement but also a constant check on the goals and motives of the group.

This experiment in a new type of social and religious living naturally attracted considerable attention. Oneida became known as a model community in which the thrifty ingenuity of its Yankee founders was combined in a practical way with the Puritan emphasis on holiness. A policy of restricting membership and of eliminating all but one branch society (at Wallingford, Connecticut) led to a consolidation of resources and an assurance of the essential unity of thought and conduct, and the financial success was due largely to this policy. But the interest of the out-

side world brought criticism as well as praise. The idea of "complex marriage" called down the invectives of the neighboring clergy and resulted eventually in a modification of the communistic ideal. The abandonment of the peculiar social arrangements in 1879 marked the beginning of the transformation of Oneida, so that although a prosperous town and industrial organization still exist, there is little connection with the original religious community other than that of tradition. The attempt at creating a lasting Christian Community failed, but not before an example of happy and prosperous life in an interacting fellowship had been shown to the nation.

Amana

Similar in many respects to the Oneida Community but having a different emphasis and growing out of a different background was the Amana Society in central Iowa. Of all the Christian communisms in America, this one has been the most successful. The roots of this group lie in the teachings of the German Pietists, particularly in the philosophy of Spener as interpreted by Eberhard Gruber in 1714. Stressing a doctrine of present-day inspiration, somewhat similar to that held earlier by Montanus, the early leaders preached successfully in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland in the early eighteenth century and established numerous local congregations. Persecution followed the

local groups relentlessly until the remaining faithful sought refuge in America in 1843, establishing themselves first near Buffalo and then moving out to their present site in central Iowa in 1855-64. Although the Amana Society became thoroughly communistic in organization and in practice, the communism was not derived from economic theory but was simply seized upon as the most expeditious means for serving God more adequately.

These Inspirationists are careful to say, in the history of their society,...that they do not practice communism for temporal or pecuniary purposes; nor for the purpose of solving great social problems, but that they may better lead the true Christian life; and that their communism is based on faith, and requires self-denial and the love of God and men.⁷⁰

It was a religious impulse that first united the Inspirationists into groups in Europe and it has been the same interest that has bound together the eighteen hundred (in 1913) members of the Amana Society. Their life is considered ascetic by the secular world, but it is in accord with their policy of living for the purpose of eliminating anything from their lives that might divert them from God. A yearly renewal of their allegiance to the Lord (Bundesschliessung,) and an annual spiritual examination (Untersuchung) conducted by the leader of the Society has helped to keep the religious goals clear. Form and

70. Hinds, American Communities and Co-operative Colonies, 311.

ceremony is ill-thought of but every two years an elaborate and solemn Love-Feast (Liebesmahl) commands the attention of the entire community. These special exercises are in addition to the eleven regular weekly religious services. With the salvation of souls as their supreme object in life, the Society members think of their Community as "but a school of preparation for the next world."⁷¹

The Amana Society is largely independent of the secular world. In an intimate, democratic, religious fellowship the members have sought to live for each other in order to live better in preparation for the life to come. In their common efforts at piety they have incidentally developed a highly prosperous community. Their industries of woolen mills, flour mills, saw-mills, dye-shops, and agriculture are operated in common for the benefit of all. Family life is maintained although marriage is not especially encouraged, following St. Paul's line of thought. Common meals for several families is the usual practice. The happiness and general air of prosperity that pervades the settlement is reported by Hinds:

...More than seventeen hundred people live here in comfort and happiness, each one sure of enough to eat and drink and wear so long as he lives - sure, too, of a home and friends - sure, also, of such discipline and instruction as shall keep him constantly reminded of the

⁷¹. Taylor, "Communitistic Societies in America," Hastings, editor, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, I, 366.

supreme importance of a temperate, virtuous holy life. They live in such perpetual peace that no lawyer is found in their midst, in such habits of morality that no sheriff walks their street; in such plenty that no beggars are seen.⁷²

Successful as this community has been, however, it is gradually dying out as a separate religious group. The most recent census lists the total membership of the Amana Church Society as being only eight hundred and eighty.⁷³ The exclusive nature of its membership and its limited contacts with the outside world have prohibited its growth and have circumscribed its influence. More recent attempts at Christian fellowship have been vitally concerned with serving as leaven for a non-Christian society.

Iona

A laboratory in religious living situated on the isle of Iona off the west coast of Scotland presents a vivid example of a contemporary interacting fellowship and holds real promise for the future of the Protestant Church. The community is the result of the work of Rev. George F. MacLeod who resigned from the regular ministry in the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) to work on the task of making

72. American Communities and Co-operative Colonies, 317.

73. Cf. 1945 Edition of Yearbook of American Churches as cited in E. Eastman Irvine, editor, The World Almanac and Book of Facts for 1947 (New York: New York World Telegram, 1947), 743.

more effective the Christian witness of the church in to-day's world. At Iona, the center from which Christianity first radiated into England and Scotland and even the Continent under St. Columba, MacLeod gathered together a small group of young ministers and laymen in 1938 with the avowed purpose of cultivating a more vital and a more practical religious life. The group adopted a rule of faith and worship not unlike that of the monastic orders and set themselves to the task of rebuilding the ancient ruined abbey of St. Columba.

The rebuilding of the abbey, however, was but a means to a much higher end. Realizing the inadequacy of the message of most preachers to-day, these Scots ministers conceived the plan of living together in close fellowship with lay craftsmen and of working together on a common project. George MacLeod tells of their idea.

Suppose, we said, that we go and "feel" what it is like when you try to apply Christianity to the whole of life, and not just to men's intellect and in their leisure hours. The answers...we felt could never be found in books but might glint on the wall if we got on to a wall and worked together, and fed together and argued together and worshipped together.⁷⁴

With this thought at the basis of the plan, every summer since 1938 groups of masons, carpenters and other craftsmen have gathered with thirty-odd young ministers for three

74. "The Idea of Iona," The Christian Century, 64 (January 22, 1947), 109.

months. The purpose of the community has been set forth succinctly in these words:

1) To learn "what it means to be 'corporately separate' for the 20th Century. By our worship and our common life on the island we get something of...a microcosmic but concentrated foretaste of what a 'congregation' should be";

2) "to sit at meat with craftsmen brothers who... are in touch all winter with the mainland industrial pressures and...are not slow to tell us...how separated-in the wrong sense - has become the church, and how incomprehensible to them is our ecclesiastical language and fastidious 'otherness'." ⁷⁵

During the summer months the craftsmen and clerics follow a simple, well-regulated rule of life including regular daily devotions. When they separate at the end of the summer, they continue their rule of daily devotions and meet at regular intervals throughout the year. The craftsmen return to their regular work, but the ministers, who have enrolled for a two year course of strict training, go out from Iona to preach in remote country churches or to stimulate lay work in the slums and in the great housing centers in industrial cities. Others go into factories or onto the docks as laborers while carrying on a constant effort at showing their fellow workers the relevance of Christian truths. Those in training are pledged to a rule of daily Bible study and prayer, a planned day, and some effort at a unified economic witness. After the two year period

75. Quoted in Time, 49 (February 3, 1947), 66.

of training the members are free to resign but most retain their membership, continue to follow the rule in their own parishes, attend monthly meetings during the winter, and re-assemble for a week of re-orientation at Iona in the summer. All members plan to keep their personal expenditures down to Britain's national average income and keep open accounts which they discuss freely among themselves.

The Iona community is a unique combination of a creative, interacting fellowship leading to a deepening of personal religious life and of a program for making Christianity articulate in the social, economic, and political world. The ministry that radiates out from the Community concerns itself with men's bodies as well as with their souls, and is social as well as personal. George MacLeod puts it this way:

It is wrong to pray only for "Margaret suffering from tuberculosis" if you know too well the noisome tenement in and by which the suffering began. If we work with Margaret in prayer, we must work with Margaret's father in the housing issues at the next election.⁷⁶

The spirit of Iona is reflected in America in Kirkridge, Pennsylvania, where each summer since 1942 a group of ministers and laymen have gathered for a brief three day retreat to follow a pattern of devotions, manual work, discussion and meditation. Sponsored by the Federal Council

76. "The Idea of Iona," 110.

of the Churches of Christ in America, the retreat is conceived as an opportunity for spiritual rejuvenation. Leaders of the Church to-day feel the need for a vital interacting fellowship for the purification of their lives and the enlarging of their vision.

Christian Science

At the time that the Christian communistic communities were flourishing there developed a new type of group activity which was to assume large dimensions under the name of Christian Science. This movement made a new departure in Christianity by placing a major stress not only on the saving of the soul but also on the healing of the body. The psychotherapeutic value of Christianity has already been noted, and throughout its many centuries of history there have been innumerable instances of therapy through religious faith. Christian Science was neither the first nor the only group to stress the power of religion in healing, but it has been the most successful. It is representative of the many spiritual healing groups that flourish to-day.

The successful development and expansion of Christian Science is an amazing phenomenon since both its philosophy and its practice are open to obvious criticism. The founder of the movement, Mary Baker Eddy, had been troubled

from infancy by serious symptoms of an hysterical neurosis. When she was cured of her disabling symptoms through a simple mental treatment by a lay practitioner, P. P. Quimby, she saw the possibilities inherent in faith cure. Becoming Quimby's secretary, she assisted in his studies on religion and spiritual medicine and after his death continued them, thus laying the foundations for her religion. In 1867 she opened a school of Christian Science Mind-healing in Lynn and began to disseminate her doctrines. Fourteen years later she opened the Massachusetts Metaphysical College under a charter from the state and with the nucleus of students taught in her College established the Church of Christ, Scientist. The fact that her work flourished from the very beginning indicates that her teaching was meeting a felt need that organized religion had not recognized.

Mary Baker Eddy's teachings, which became the authority for Christian Science of almost equal importance as the Bible, stressed the denial of the reality of illness. Illness, she claimed, is an error of the mind. Illness is impossible since it is incompatible with the essential goodness of God. Sickness is not real but is only a matter of belief. Matter does not really exist; only mind exists, and mind is God. She wrote:

Become conscious for a single moment that Life and intelligence are purely spiritual, - neither in nor of

matter, - and the body will then utter no complaint.⁷⁷

The vague writings in Mary Baker Eddy's chief textbook, Science and Health, With Key to the Scriptures, deal with ideas about God, mind, matter, sin, disease, health, harmony, the denial of error, etc. They are not so much of interest as is the one central theme that is reiterated that mind controls body. Mrs. Eddy was looking for therapy and she found it in dealing with the patient's own idea of his illness.

More important for this discussion than the philosophy of Christian Science is the part played in it by group fellowship. An integral part of the services of worship of the Christian Science Churches is a Wednesday evening meeting in which a large place is given to testimonials in praise to God and Mother Eddy for deliverance from the errors of the mortal mind. At such a meeting held on January 7, 1948, at the large Mother Church in Boston an audience of about fifteen hundred gathered to sing, to listen to the cultured voice of a reader as long lessons were read first from Psalms, John, and Matthew and then from Science and Health, to join in silent prayer and the Lord's Prayer, and to hear testimonies. The testimony period of a full half hour was opened with these words: "The meeting is now open

77. Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures, (Boston: Trustees under the will of Mary Baker G. Eddy, 1875, 1906), 14.

for experiences, testimonies, or remarks pertaining to Christian Science healing." In all, fourteen people spoke including four men and ten women. The speakers represented a wide age span from a young woman in her early twenties to a man of about sixty. For the most part the speakers expressed their gratitude to Christian Science and to Mary Baker Eddy and told of healings from such diseases as scarlet fever, small-pox, varicose veins, abscessed tooth and broken bones. Some of the speakers spoke in less specific terms giving thanks for "the indescribable joy of spiritual illumination" or testifying that "Christian Science does meet all our daily needs." All of the speakers spoke clearly in obvious sincerity but without any extreme emotional display. Even a skeptical visitor could not help being impressed by the conviction evident not only in the speakers but felt in the congregation as well. The common bond of belief in Christian Science seemed to gather the large audience into a unified whole and an air of confidence and satisfaction was present in a contagious quality. In the spacious cloak rooms long after the meeting a great many people were visiting together. Obviously the meeting meant a great deal to regular members and it could not fail to be impressive to visitors.

Christian Science opened itself to valid criticism as a therapeutic agency in ignoring the necessity for diag-

nosis in illness and in its failure to distinguish between organic and functional disease. The absolute claims of its philosophical and theological systems have raised doubts from many sources and the apparent inconsistencies of the founder have been often noted. Nevertheless, the Church of Christ, Scientist, has continued to flourish, especially among the economically secure, and lists its membership at 268,915.⁷⁸ Individual indoctrination has been undergirded by group conviction in a thoroughly effective way.

5. THE PRESENT CENTURY

The Emmanuel Movement

At the beginning of the present century there developed another movement within the church which was similar to Christian Science in its therapeutic emphasis. Known as the Emmanuel Movement, it centered in the effort at ministering to the health of the whole man, bringing the influence of religion to bear on physical illness. The philosophy and practice of Christian Science had tended to discredit religion in the eyes of medical science but at the same time it had responded to needs of men. It

78. Cf. 1945 Edition of Yearbook of American Churches as cited in Irvine, editor, The World Almanac and Book of Facts for 1947, 743.

was in part as an effort to meet men's needs for health without committing the errors of Christian Science that the Emmanuel Movement developed.

Elwood Worcester, the rector of a down-town church in Boston had long been interested in the possibilities of employing Christian faith as an instrument of healing not only for the immortal soul but for the human body as well. After several years of intensive study into the relationship existing between the psychic and physical parts of man, Worcester and his associates (especially Rev. Samuel McComb and Isador H. Coriot, M. D.,) at Emmanuel Church (Protestant Episcopal) determined to introduce a ministry of healing into the work of their church. Their interest resulted in the organization in 1906 of a Class for the Treatment of Nervous Disorders.

Emmanuel Church had already been active in the relief of illness through a Tuberculosis Class organized in the social service department of the church and conducted from 1905 under the medical direction of Dr. Joseph H. Pratt. This class employed not only the approved scientific methods of combating tuberculosis but it added the moral elements of discipline, friendship, encouragement, and hope, and although the work was carried on under unfavorable con-

ditions, it was eminently successful.⁷⁹ The success of this class in which the church and the doctor worked together was one of the factors suggesting the organization of the Emmanuel Movement. Throughout the entire history of the movement it was characterized by a close spirit of co-operation between doctors and ministers. Suggested in its name, the Class for the Treatment of Nervous Disorders, the work concerned itself only with functional nervous disorders, and the work was so organized that persons were accepted for treatment only after exhaustive examination by competent medical authorities had indicated the likelihood of help from the church group.

The Emmanuel Movement began with the simple announcement of a class on Wednesday evenings in which the possibility of making the whole man whole would be considered.⁸⁰ For the first meeting two hundred and forty people appeared, and before many weeks had passed, in this church which had never before had a mid-week devotional service, five to eight hundred people attended regularly, and the number went as high as a thousand. Robert MacDonald, writing at the time of the height of the movement, described the content

79. Worcester, Elwood, Samuel McComb, and Isador H. Coriot, Religion and Medicine (New York: Moffatt, Yard and Company, 1908), 1-2.

80. Cf. Robert MacDonald, Mind, Religion and Health (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1908), 247.

of the talks given at the meetings.

...The causes of disease are expounded, arousement of the dormant psychic nature of the sick person is emphasized, the remedial forces of God's good universe are announced; Christ's cures of numberless bodily ills are proclaimed, His healing power for our present maladies invoked, a spiritual atmosphere created.⁸¹

Obvious factors present in these meetings of particular interest in this dissertation were the power of suggestion, re-education into the psychogenic nature of illness, and the continuous moral influence. These factors were furthered by quiet personal treatment, but at the center of the entire program was the weekly group meeting. Similar in some respects to the familiar prayer meeting, these classes, however, in their enthusiasm and far reaching results can scarcely be compared with the ill-attended mid-week services still in vogue in many churches. Hymn singing, Bible reading, prayer periods with the people, kneeling as prayer requests were read, and short practical addresses applying the teaching of Christ to human ills constituted the major features of the program. An hour of sociability in the social rooms of the church followed the devotional exercises.

The response to the Emmanuel Movement was tremendous. Worcester tells of the wide out-reach of the movement which penetrated all religious barriers, including Roman Catholics

81. Loc. cit.

and Jews as well as Protestants of many denominations.

It enabled us to communicate spiritual life and a living faith in God and Christ to hundreds of persons who had remained untouched by religion and whom we could have reached in no other way.⁸³

The weekly class provided for lonely lives a friendly and hope-inspiring atmosphere where all the members of the group felt linked together in the comradeship of a common cause. The bright side of life was constantly stressed, and through the program of the church new interests in life were provided and new opportunities for service were discovered. Personal conferences with doctors and ministers provided human sympathy, objective advice and more intense re-education through methods of relaxation and suggestion. The social service department assisted in follow-up work. Dr. Richard Cabot took an active interest in the work and after making a detailed study of the carefully kept records for an eight month period (March 1 - November 1, 1907), he reported, "...Out of several hundred cases there are two or three very striking cures in that clinic; but reasonable, moderate improvement has occurred in about 61% of all cases."⁸⁴

82. Cf. Worcester, McComb, Coriot, Religion and Medicine, 373-74.

83. Ibid., 383.

84. Richard C. Cabot, "Psychotherapy and its Relation to Religion," No. 5 of the Emmanuel Church Publications on Religion and Medicine (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1908), 50.

Here is one of the earliest examples of an effective group therapy attempt. The idea was taken up by other churches and enjoyed a brief period of popularity. Few ministers, however, were qualified either by training or by interest to conduct such therapeutic work, and so active interest in such healing classes on the part of the church diminished.

The Oxford Group Movement

During the 1930s the world of religion became conscious of a new movement centering in intimate fellowship groups. Growing out of meetings held among students at Oxford, England, the movement became known as the Oxford Group Movement. In purpose it was the effort at revitalizing religious life throughout the Christian world by gathering men and women together into groups or cells where they could be helped to open their lives to the Spirit of God. In actual fact it has become a sort of group therapy. The movement has met with its greatest success among intellectuals and those in the higher income groups. The founder of the Oxford Groups was Frank Buchman, a Lutheran minister, who experienced a spiritual conversion in 1908 which led to a complete surrender of his life to the will of God. While engaged in student work in a large State University he saw the futility of mass evangelistic efforts and so in-

stituted a program of personal contact which resulted in great success. Within three years there were twelve hundred men engaged in voluntary Bible study. During this time, however, he saw the need for corporate help and so devised the now famous plan of house-parties, i.e. group meetings in houses that were reminiscent of the gatherings among Montanists, Franciscans, Friends of God and Methodists as well as the earliest Christians. The house-parties, which are at the core of the work of the Group, had their inception in Kuling, China, in 1918 where eighty persons met with Buchman in the home of a Chinese diplomat "in order that they might take counsel together for the deepest matter in their respective lives, the religion of their soul, its helps and its hindrances."⁸⁵ The emphasis in the Oxford Group is on the need for each person to surrender his life entirely to God and then to seek and trust His guidance and support in every situation. The house-parties provided an opportunity for sharing personal religious experiences in an atmosphere less forbidding than that of a formal church. Designed especially for those :

...Who were interested in religion but unready to attend formal church services, (the) house-parties were an exhilaration, an astonishingly successful religious

85. Murray, Group Movements Throughout the Ages, 312.

advance whenever they were held.⁸⁶

Setting down four absolutes as a goal for personal living: - absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, absolute love, the Oxford Groups under Buchman's direction then evolved four ways of attaining to the ideals. Complete surrender of one's will to God would be followed by restitution for any wrongs done or any ill-will harbored. Guidance would be sought from God in a quiet time observed either corporately or individually. The fourth and most unique step would be in sharing through confession and through witnessing. It was in sharing that the unique place of the group fellowship was stressed. Feeling a close tie of comradeship within the circle of earnest Groupers the members shared in public confession their problems and failures.

In practice it was found that confession one to another...was helpful and the only way to true fellowship...From its earliest days the Christian Church had been well aware of the value of such confession.⁸⁷

Sharing served the purpose of bringing to light common personal problems and strengthened the ties of friendship as the members of the group sought to help one another. The therapeutic value of group catharsis is obviously a signifi-

86. A. J. Russell, For Sinners Only (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1932), 33.

87. Ibid., 17.

cant factor here. The group, moreover, offers itself for supporting help as its members strive to deal with their emotional difficulties and their social problems. The close resemblance of a sharing session of an Oxford Group to a scientifically designed therapy group is noted by careful observers.

A transcript of a meeting of the Oxford Group... with relatively few changes in terminology might easily be confused with one of the many types of group therapy under medical supervision.⁸⁸

Sharing included witnessing as well as confession and it was this aspect of the movement that led to its rapid expansion. Groups sprang up all over England, radiating out from Oxford where Buchman had done some highly successful personal evangelism and where the first international house party was held in 1930. From England the movement has continued to grow until to-day Oxford Group cells are found throughout the world. They have consistently refused to become a sect but have tried to work in and through the churches to deepen the spiritual life of the church. The movement has received the backing of many prominent church leaders throughout Christendom and it has had a significant influence on the spiritual life of thou-

88. Edward M. L. Burchard, Joseph J. Michaels, and Benjamin Kotkov, "Criteria for the Evaluation of Group Therapy," Unpublished manuscript (Mental Hygiene Division, U. S. Veterans' Administration, Boston, Massachusetts, 1947), 5.

sands of Christians. For the most part it has sought out the upper strata of society and has identified itself with a comfortable and even luxurious way of life. Its critics point to its lack of intellectual emphasis, its adolescent appeal through emotional testimonies and its annihilation of a sense of personal responsibility by following implicitly the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They point, also, to the grave possibility of that confessional sharing of becoming an insincere and unwholesome practice. Relevant though these criticisms may be, there is no denying the positive influence that the creative fellowship of Oxford Groupers have brought to the contemporary church.

First Community Church, Columbus, Ohio
A Contemporary Church

Group fellowship is nothing new to the Christian Church. As the foregoing survey has indicated, in almost every period of history creative interacting groups have arisen to recall the church to its primary mission or to re-emphasize a forgotten aspect of its ministry. Such fellowship units, however, have existed not only in protest against the church or in criticism of it; they have always been the very heart of the continuing established churches. Where they have broken from the organized circles, they have first been nurtured from within the recognized organizations. From the start Christianity has been a fellowship,

and that fellowship has found best expression in small groups.

The life of the church of to-day is most active where men and women and children gather in fellowship. The churches that are most spiritually alive and that are contributing most to the personal lives of their members and to the wider life of the community are churches with creative groups operating within the larger organization as a leavening influence. Progressive churches of to-day, utilizing the findings of group therapists in many fields, are placing more and more stress on corporate activity. Such a church is the First Community Church in Columbus, Ohio. Here is a church which recognizes the need for group experience at all age levels and which provides for each of its 3,475 members some group fellowship where needs and interests will be similar. From the earliest group activity in the day nursery school, where parents are invited to observe their children in interaction with others, to the Sweetheart's Club open only to women sixty-five years of age and older there is abundant opportunity for corporate experience.

One of the distinctive types of interacting groups is found in the young adult program. There is no age group that is more difficult to keep within the family of the church than this, and yet it is this very group that needs

so urgently a wholesome fellowship to aid in a growth into full maturity. First Community Church has had remarkable success with young adults and especially with young married couples. Seven circles of ten couples each now exist, meeting monthly in homes of the members for a potluck supper and an evening of serious study. Topics covered touch on all manner of personal and family problems, give full consideration to constructive service to church and community, and give particular stress to the developing of a more meaningful faith. Here, again, is the creative Christian cell nurturing a spiritual development that leads to a social concern. It provides for many, moreover, the only social contact where Christian living is emphasized.⁸⁹ Other groups serve the interests and needs of unmarried young adults. Study groups for older members, some for men, some for women, some for mixed groups provide mutual support for the Christian quest. New members in the church family are introduced into one of these small groups to gain help in their start toward greater spiritual development. Here are the overtones of John Wesley's Class Meetings.

These smaller groups are linked together through larger fellowship groups meeting in the church on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. This discussion does not in any sense

89. Roy A. Burkhardt, How the Church Grows (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), 41.

exhaust the variety of group activity in First Community Church, but it does suggest the depth of the program. Under the leadership of the pastor, Dr. Roy A. Burkhart, there is a full recognition of the value of groups in all of the worship, educational, recreational, counseling and administrative emphases in the church. Here is a forward looking organization in which traditional church fellowship takes on new meaning and is given a new direction based on an empirical approach to group activity. In such a church the principles underlying effective therapy are being employed to advance mental health and spiritual development.

The present scene is one in which increasing recognition is being given by the church to the therapeutic values in group activity. Although Iona and Kirkridge were discussed above⁹⁰ following the consideration of nineteenth century Christian communities, they are obviously a highly significant part of the present picture. In these communities, in the groups of First Community Church, indeed, in most of the groups active throughout the history of the church, the dynamics already discussed in Chapter Two have been at work. How an understanding of these dynamics has developed is the next topic for consideration.

90. Cf. Pages 102-6 above.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT OF GROUP THERAPY

1. BACKGROUND

The experience of centuries in the use of creative groups by the Christian Church has indicated the significant role played by group activity, but the church has done little to investigate either the dynamics or the therapeutic possibilities in groups. There has been some recognition by the church of the healing power of group activity as has been shown in monasticism, Wesley's class meetings and more recent trends in the Emmanuel Movement and the Oxford Group Movement. But little has been done in really exploiting the group for therapeutic purposes. Within clinics in the medical world, however, there has come an increasing appreciation of the value of group therapy. The immediate task in this chapter is to trace the development of scientific experimentation in group therapy, not to give a complete chronological account of all recorded experiments but rather to show how principles and values have been developed. In this chapter the term "group psychotherapy" is used to indicate work carried on under the auspices of medically trained and psychiatrically orientated therapists. For the most part the work has been done in clinics or agencies where psychiatric services are available for diagnos-

tic and therapeutic purposes; indeed, many therapists recognize group psychotherapy only where such services are present.¹ It is the purpose of this dissertation to show how the principles and values uncovered in such situations can be used to good advantage in church group activities.

One of the roots of modern group psychotherapy lies in the thought and writings of the French neurologist, Dejerine.² In studying treatment of diseases of the nervous system, Dejerine was led to believe that the most important step in curing his patients was "to get hold of their morale, in other words, to practice psychotherapy."³ Accepting this principle, two of Dejerine's students, Camus and Pagniez, published a book⁴ dealing with the rest treatment for psychoneurotics in which psychotherapy played a large part. They noted in passing that patients in the large ward (Salle Pinel) of the Salpêtrière (mental hospital in Paris) were quieter, relatively more cheerful and made better improvement than those of greater financial means who had private rooms.⁵ The implications of this

1. Cf. Slavson, An Introduction to Group Therapy, xi.

2. Cf. J. Dejerine and E. Gauckler, The Psychoneuroses and Their Treatment by Psychotherapy. S. E. Jelliffe, Translator (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1913).

3. Ibid., v.

4. Cf. Jean Camus and Phillippe Pagniez, Isolement et Psychotherapie (Paris: Felix Alcan, Editeur, 1904).

5. Ibid., 103.

observation, however, passed unnoticed and no further effort was made to employ the reciprocal influence of the group on individual patients. It was left to an American doctor, Joseph H. Pratt, who later became familiar with Dejerine, to explore the therapeutic values of the group.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRATT SCHOOL IN MEDICAL CLINICS

Contemporary group psychotherapy, of which Dr. Pratt is recognized by many as the founder,⁶ centers its attention on psychotic and psychoneurotic personalities and on patients suffering from psychosomatic disorders, and it is with the latter group that the first scientific work was done. On July 1, 1905, Dr. Pratt organized a class for tuberculous patients and in doing so not only initiated a new departure in medical treatment but also, without saying much about it, gave recognition to the psychosomatic approach that is gaining increasing favor in medical circles to-day. Dr. Pratt evidently recognized that the problem with his tuberculous patients lay as much in their emotional life as it did in the cells of their bodies.⁷ The implications of this approach were only partially seen at the time since the basic reason for organizing the class was to save time and

6. Cf. Klapman, Group Psychotherapy: Theory and Practice, 2-3.

7. Cf. Flanders Dunbar, Mind and Body: Psychosomatic Medicine (New York: Random House, 1947), 216-24.

energy for a busy doctor by giving instructions and encouragement to patients in a group. It was hoped that weekly meetings of the patients would aid in maintaining the close supervision so necessary for the successful treatment of tuberculosis.⁸ The historical significance of this class was not apparent even to Dr. Pratt at the time, but it marked the beginning of an interest in the medical world in class treatment. Dr. Pratt compared his class to the earlier Wesleyan Class meeting in which

A class leader was appointed whose duty it was to take charge of the meetings, to obtain reports from the members regarding their progress in the spiritual life and to admonish or to comfort as the need arose.⁹

From the beginning Dr. Pratt stressed the same sort of friendly, personal attention to each member that had characterized the Methodist meetings. The class meant giving "a large amount of care to a small number of patients"¹⁰ and with this in mind the groups were limited to 25. Larger classes proved generally to be too unwieldy. Under the name of the Emmanuel Church Tuberculosis Class the organization met first in Dr. Pratt's consulting rooms but eventual-

8. Cf. Joseph H. Pratt, "The 'Home Sanatorium' Treatment of Consumption," Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, 154 (February 22, 1906), 210-16.

9. Pratt, "The Principles of Class Treatment and Their Application to Various Chronic Diseases," Hospital Social Service, 6 (1922), 401.

10. Cf. Pratt, "The Class Method in the Home Treatment of Tuberculosis and What it Has Accomplished," Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, 166 (February 22, 1912), 283.

ly was held in the Massachusetts General Hospital. The close relationship of this class to the Emmanuel Church and the program of co-operation between doctors and clergy which resulted has been noted above in the discussion of the Emmanuel Movement. Its influence on social service work was even more significant, for Dr. Richard Cabot, strongly influenced by the success of the class with its "friendly visitor" who followed the patient into his home, was stimulated to establish at the Massachusetts General Hospital what developed into the contemporary Social Service system.¹¹ Dr. Cabot grasped the significance of the work of the class and prophesied that the class method was "sure to be applied before long to every common chronic disease, such as dyspepsia, neurasthenia, heart disease, etc."¹²

The therapeutic value of the class itself was soon recognized by Dr. Pratt as the distinctive aspect of this treatment, a feature even more significant than the question of saving time and labor.¹³ As a result of the group meet-

11. Cf. Pratt, "The Tuberculosis Class: An Experiment in Home Treatment," Journal of the Outdoor Life, 14 (March, 1917), 74.

12. Richard C. Cabot, "Social Service Work Permitted at the Massachusetts General Hospital," Massachusetts General Hospital Reports, Social Service Department, 1905-1926 (Boston: The Fort Hill Press, 1906), October 1, 1906, 15.

13. Cf. Pratt, "The Class Method of Treating Consumption in the Homes of the Poor," Journal of American Medical Association, 49 (August 31, 1907), 758.

ings, the members were given mental stimulation, enjoyable social contacts and continuous encouragement. Progress made by some served not only to encourage others but led to friendly rivalry in improvement. Recognition was given to those making the best progress. A mood of optimism was thus stimulated and intensified in a way impossible in individual treatment. In such an atmosphere the patients were more receptive to the doctor's teachings, and so Dr. Pratt began to give brief two or three minute talks of advice and encouragement.¹⁴

Another significant feature introduced into the class work was the use of testimonies by the patients. Newcomers were encouraged not only by the appearance of the majority of the class members but also by the accounts of improvement made willingly by some of the members.¹⁵ The testimonies were found to be distinct aids in helping class members to keep up their courage and their determination to persevere in the prescribed treatment. When asked how he had been able to induce his patients to follow the rigorous treatment routine, Dr. Pratt invariably pointed to the class

14. Pratt, "Results Obtained in the Treatment of Pulmonary Tuberculosis by the Class Method," British Medical Journal, 2 (October 10, 1908), 1070.

15. Pratt, "The Tuberculosis Class: An Experiment in Home Treatment, 76.

meeting.¹⁶ The result in statistical terms after the first nine years of the class's existence was the restoration to health of 56% (104) of all the patients admitted into the group.¹⁷ When only those graduated from the class were considered (discounting those who had died or been dismissed) it was found that 84% were well and working at the end of the first ten years of the class. When other doctors attempted to employ the class method in treating tuberculosis in patients who could not afford sanitarium care, their results¹⁸ were not always as good and many of the men were frankly skeptical of the procedure. Some claimed that Dr. Pratt's unique personality was the most significant element in the success reported, but Dr. Pratt objected to this view. He answered his critics by stressing the necessity for adequate facilities and for careful attention to the details of the class program. He re-emphasized the enthusiasm of his patients for the class and the incentive given by the class to a strict adherence to the

16. Cf. Pratt, "The Principles of Class Treatment and Their Application to Various Chronic Diseases, 405.

17. Cf. Pratt, "Results Obtained by the Class Method of Home Treatment in Pulmonary Tuberculosis During a Period of Ten Years," The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, 176 (January 4, 1917), 13.

18. Cf. Pratt, "The Class Method in the Home Treatment of Tuberculosis and What it Has Accomplished," 280-88, for a review of other classes and for a defense of his method.

treatment routine.

The essential soundness of the class method was shown by its successful application to other medical problems. Dr. William R. P. Emerson applied the class method to a group of undernourished children at the Boston Dispensary in 1908. Seeking to find the basic causes of the lack of gain in weight, Dr. Emerson grouped 15 of the most undernourished children together and made an intensive study of each of them including a social worker's report of home conditions. The parents were instructed to keep detailed records of the children's eating and of their habits in general. A class was then held for the children and parents together in which failures to gain were discussed openly in class under the doctor's leadership. The source of the problem was generally discovered easily, and the doctor had an opportunity to make pertinent remarks about hygiene, diet, and food values. To help stimulate progress on the part of the children a sort of game was made of weight gain with each child being seated competitively on the basis of his gain. The results of the class in terms of co-operation from both children and parents were very good. Dr. Emerson attributed the success of the class to the competitive motive and to the objective evidence of results which helped to break down prejudices about food and treatment. Other doctors followed Emerson's lead so that before long

most of the larger medical centers were employing the class method with undernourished children. Indeed, the popularity of the method as an adjunct for medical treatment led to the formation of classes for cardiac, diabetic, pre-natal and post-partum patients, for patients needing corrective exercises, for patients with vaginitis, and for those with mental disorders.¹⁹

The extension by Dr. Pratt of the methods of class treatment into the field of the psychoneuroses was a logical development of the success of the work in physical illness. The first class organized with the purpose of emotional re-education was started in 1930 at the Boston Dispensary and was soon given the name "Thought-Control Class." To that class were referred the large group of patients thronging the clinic whose various complaints had no apparent organic basis. The techniques of a friendly interest, an optimistic atmosphere, progress reports, brief inspirational talks, and testimonies from class members - all of which had been learned in the tuberculosis experiments - were applied with good success. The exact procedure of the class will be dealt with in detail in chapter six below, but it is of interest to note in passing that through this

19. Cf. Herbert I. Harris, "Efficient Psychotherapy for the Large Out-Patient Clinic," The New England Journal of Medicine, 221 (July 6, 1939), 3.

group method 68% of the members reported being helped.²⁰

Although Dr. Pratt gave careful attention to the brief talks and used them as an opportunity to give instruction in mental hygiene and information regarding the effect of emotional reactions on the body, nevertheless, his stress was primarily inspirational. "I appeal," he said, "to their hearts rather than to their heads; in other words, to their emotions more than to their reason."²¹ He attributed the success of his class to the group reassurance which awakened a hope of recovery in new patients and to the faith in the class, its methods, and its director.

The continued success of the Thought-Control Class led other doctors to make deliberate use of group psychotherapy. R. W. Buck, working with patients with hypertension whose symptoms in the early stages are identical with those of the psychoneurotic, used group psychotherapy along the Pratt lines with the addition of an emphasis on diet. Stressing the psychic origin of symptoms and the importance of relaxation, Buck found that two-thirds of his patients showed good improvement as evidenced by a significant drop

20. Cf. the statistical study by Harris, "Efficient Psychotherapy for the Large Out-Patient Clinic," The New England Journal of Medicine, 221 (July 6, 1939), 1-5.

21. Pratt, "The Group Method in the Treatment of Psychosomatic Disorders," J. L. Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 85.

in blood pressure.²²

Group psychological processes were used in a similar way by Chapell, Stephano, Rogerson, and Pike in the treatment of peptic ulcers.²³ In an experimental course of forty-five minute lectures given every day for six weeks to 32 patients, 31 were free from symptoms when the treatment was over. These patients were observed over a three year period and although there were some recurrences of the symptoms, the group as a whole made much better progress than a similar control group of 20 who were given no group psychotherapy. The intensive treatment stressed control of worry, control of conversation, control of effort, explanation or insight, self-assurance or self-suggestion, and assurance of induced suggestions.

Another therapist following in the line of Dr. Pratt, but one who added a greater psychoanalytic stress was Dr. Hadden in Presbyterian Hospital, Philadelphia. His interest in group therapy grew out of observing successful class instruction of tuberculous, diabetic, and neurosyphilitic patients. His work with psychoneurotics in the out-patient department was organized in 1939 around a class as a time

22. Cf. Robert W. Buck, "The Class Method in the Treatment of Essential Hypertension," Annals of Internal Medicine, 11 (September, 1937), 514- 18.

23. Cf. M. N. Chappell, J. J. Stephano, J. S. Rogerson, and F. H. Pike, "The Value of Group Psychological Procedures in the Treatment of Peptic Ulcers," American Journal of Digestive Diseases and Nutrition, 3 (January, 1937), 813- 17.

saving plan, but the inherent value of the class proved itself again in this case as it had so often before. Dr. Hadden followed a procedure very much like that of Dr. Pratt, but added particular stress on psychodynamic or psychotherapeutic principles. Discussion of the various mechanisms of the mind was encouraged as an aid in making the topics under discussion more personally relevant and more forceful. Dr. Hadden was careful to point out the basis upon which his class was organized.

...This method does not rely upon a strong emotional appeal for its efficacy. It is not a revival meeting type of session at which noble sentiments and stimulating pep talks are delivered. The sessions of the class are meetings at which sound basic principles of psychodynamics and psychotherapy are presented in the language of the patients, and all methods used to benefit the patient in individual interviews can be employed in the group.²⁴

The response of the patients to the lectures and discussions was encouraging for they readily recognized their own abnormalities and discussed them openly and freely. As they became acquainted with such mechanisms as repression, sublimation, projection and ambivalence, and as they learned to understand the significance of early childhood and of unconscious motivation, they were better able to accept themselves more objectively and to adjust to life more suc-

24. Samuel B. Hadden, "Group Psychotherapy: A Superior Method of Treating Larger Numbers of Neurotic Patients," The American Journal of Psychiatry, 101 (July, 1944), 71.

cessfully. Hadden noted a strong transference tendency in the group toward the therapist, but he found that instead of fastening on the therapist the transference was spread to the entire group.²⁵

Another principle was stressed also in Dr. Hadden's class. In addition to being informative along analytical lines, there was a reactive emphasis.²⁶ In the discussion period the patients not only talked over their problems but were also given an opportunity to react to the situation being discussed. Through their comments they were helped in the matter of "activating some of their feelings of hostility and of ventilating repressed thoughts and desires."²⁷ Even without verbal participation they reacted emotionally as they listened to the discussion of others. The opportunity for a catharsis, even though it might be only a vicarious one, was obvious here. Such methods proved effective to some patients who had resisted individual treatment.²⁸

Hadden reported many of the factors that Pratt had discovered: the enlarged confidence given by the class, the loss of feelings of isolation, the inspiration from fellow

25. Cf. Hadden, "Group Psychotherapy," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 70.

26. Cf. *ibid.*, 69-70.

27. *Ibid.*, 69.

28. Cf. *ibid.*, 72.

sufferers leading to greater personal effort, and a feeling of greater importance by being able to help others. A statistical study of results showed that 68% of class members responding to a questionnaire indicated marked improvement, a figure which Hadden accepted as a true representation of approximate results. It is interesting to note that Harris had given the very same figure.²⁹

In very recent months Hadden has used the class method of therapy in teaching psychotherapy to his medical students.³⁰ The students learned along with the patients the role of emotion in producing disturbances of bodily function. The common mental mechanisms were not only talked about but in the discussion of the class members they were vividly represented. Instruction through such a life situation proved to be highly successful and led to a much greater interest in the field of psychotherapy on the part of the young doctors.

The group experience as a life situation has been used effectively also in the treatment of speech disorders. Dr. J. S. Greene has placed the major emphasis of his treatment of stutterers on the group approach. The stutterer

29. Hadden, "Group Psychotherapy: A Superior Method of Treating Larger Numbers of Neurotic Patients," 70; Cf. page 132.

30. Cf. Hadden, "The Utilization of a Therapy Group in Teaching Psychotherapy," The American Journal of Psychiatry, 103 (March, 1947), 644-48.

was found to be unable to respond to orthodox psychiatric procedures because of a narcissistic barrier erected by the very nature of his trouble. In a group with fellow sufferers, however, the barrier was rapidly broken down so that the patient was then able to respond to therapy. By adjusting first to the controlled environment the stutterer gradually learned to meet the larger outside world as a normal person.³¹

3. THE DEVELOPMENT IN MENTAL HOSPITALS

The approaches of Dr. Hadden and Dr. Greene were from a psychiatric orientation and suggest another stream of influence which has been developing concurrently with the work started by Dr. Pratt. This second line of development has incorporated some of the findings of Pratt and his followers but it has centered largely in mental hospitals rather than in medical clinics. Interest in group methods for the treatment of mental disorders was stimulated largely at first by the labor saving aspect of such procedures. Psychoanalytic principles with their stress on individual treatment had dominated psychiatry, but the urgency of the need for helping larger numbers of patients led to attempts in group psychotherapy. Dr. E. W. Lazell

31. Cf. James Sonnett Greene, "Speech and Voice Disorders," The Medical World, 57 (November, 1939), 719-22.

at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D. C., was one of the first to record his experiments with mental patients.

Lazell stressed the importance of the lecture method and placed considerable emphasis on the contents of his lectures. He felt that the emphasis in mental institutions should be changed from custodial care to the instruction of the patients, and that the instruction should be along the line of directing instinctive drives into more normal channels. His lectures dealt largely with this idea, using Freudian concepts expressed in easily understood language.³² He first used lectures in 1919 with individual dementia praecox patients who had not responded to individual analysis and then experimented with two groups of patients, giving a series of three lectures.³³ The results were so good that psychotherapy in groups was instituted as a regular treatment procedure. It was discovered that some patients responded to group lectures who had remained inaccessible to all individual psychotherapy. Several patients who showed very good recovery attributed the starting point of their recovery to the lectures. Stimulated by the early success of his work in reaching difficult cases,

32. Cf. E. W. Lazell, "The Group Treatment of Dementia Praecox," Psychoanalytic Review, 8 (April, 1921), 168-74.

33. Cf. Lazell, "Group Psychic Treatment of Dementia Praecox by Lectures in Mental Re-education," 733.

Lazell made continual use of group psychotherapy, always stressing the mechanisms by which man has attempted to work out the problems of his primitive emotional reactions. He found, however, that there was a place also for inspirational material and so in his course of 30 lectures he included some inspirational talks.³⁴ He noted the aid given by the group method toward socialization, and he stressed the value that resulted from discussion among the patients of their problems. Moreover, therapy was speeded up by lessening the problem of positive transfer, by lowering resistance to interpretation, and by bringing out symptoms hitherto-fore held back.³⁵ Lazell found his lecture method, supplemented by discussion after the seventh lecture, was successful in dealing with many types of patients ranging from some who were mildly neurotic to some severely psychotic.

While Lazell was stressing the re-educative possibilities of group therapy, Dr. L. C. Marsh was approaching the treatment of mental patients from a different angle. Rather than dealing with basic psychological mechanisms, Marsh aimed at extroverting the energy of his patients on a social level. He placed little importance on the subject matter used in a lecture only insisting that the material should stimulate real interest and emotion. Such stimula-

34. Ibid., 743.

35. Cf. Lazell, "Group Psychotherapy," 104.

tion proved to be a powerful impetus toward recovery. Marsh did some exploratory work in 1909 and again in 1912³⁶ but it was not until 1930 that he wrote up his procedures. Working at Kings Park State Hospital in New York, he held large group meetings for as many as 500 patients in a festive atmosphere which attracted many of the hospital personnel. His talks dealt with such subjects as adjustment to hospital life, adjustments to sex, adjustment to religion and the problem of maturing one's beliefs, as well as with topics of general current interest. Various devices were used to enhance the group spirit. Patients making good progress gave testimonies as Dr. Pratt's patients had done, a creed for health was repeated in unison, community singing was encouraged and stunt activities, spelldowns and birthday celebrations were included from time to time. Marsh acknowledged his debt to religious revivals for his method although his objectives were different. He sought a conversion, not from sin to righteousness but from phantasy to reality. He sought salvation, not for a future life but for this life with an adequacy to meet daily demands. He sought an acceptance, not of a philosophy but of the principles of mental hygiene.³⁷

36. Mentioned in passing by Marsh, "Group Treatment of the Psychoses by the Psychological Equivalent of the Revival," Mental Hygiene, 15 (April, 1931), 330.

37. Cf. *Ibid.*, 331.

Marsh was trying to stimulate his patients into a happier frame of mind, and he found that group activity served best to further his purpose. He used the group deliberately to reach this goal. "My interest," he wrote, is an emotional one; I use the crowd psychology to bring their emotional interests into squad formations to discipline and direct them toward life."³⁸ The group treatment did more than instruct the patient in overcoming his difficulty. It actually saw him through, by helping him to integrate mind, emotion, and motor activity. The extroverting function of the group could be used to good advantage with ex-patients, too, Marsh believed and so he advocated a national organization to sponsor local groups of former patients and to publish a periodical telling of successful cures and giving inspirational literature.

An outgrowth of Marsh's work in later years, at the Worcester State Hospital, was the development of classes for hospital personnel and eventually for interested persons in the community.³⁹ Further efforts were made in group therapy with psychoneurotics and patients with psy-

38. Ibid., 341.

39. Cf. Marsh, "Experiment in Group Treatment of Patients at Worcester State Hospital," Mental Hygiene, 17 (July, 1933), 396-416.

chomatic disorders in the open community in Boston.⁴⁰

The emphasis in these classes was on teaching rather than on therapy, and healthy as well as ill persons were invited to attend. In the work at Worcester and in Boston some clergymen were regular attendants.

Marsh's emphasis on the value of the group for treating the whole man was further verified by other therapists. M. G. Schroeder at the Elgin State Hospital began to use weekly classes in 1931 in which talks on a wide range of subjects were given to groups of about thirty-five members. The success of this work was indicated not only by the demand for further classes leading to the organization of a total of six by 1934 but also by the remarkable improvement among long term patients.⁴¹ Rather similar reports were made by I. M. Altshuler at the State Hospital at Eloise, Michigan. His interest began in work with music for he recognized the therapeutic value of music in giving vent to stifled emotions. "Mood music," he said, for example, "has the capacity to objectify personal sorrow; to shift it into 'world sorrow' which is, of course, easier to bear."⁴²

40. Cf. Marsh, "Group Therapy and the Psychiatric Clinic," Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases, 82 (October, 1935), 381-93.

41. Cf. M. G. Schroeder, "Group Psychotherapy in State Hospital," Elgin State Hospital Collected Papers, 2 (1936), 174-78.

42. Ira M. Altshuler, "The Organism-as-a-Whole and Music Therapy," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 228.

Altshuler used music as a medium for breaking through barriers that separated patients one from another. The flow of emotional currents in the group was stimulated by joining together in singing or in musical appreciation. "In group singing," he wrote, "such factors as inspiration, self-discipline, solidarity and friendship are cultivated."⁴³ Activities were also extended to include current event talks and general discussions. In smaller groups of ten to fifteen members personal problems were considered with considerable success. Altshuler stressed the synchronizing of all the basic forces of life - social, moral, ethical, cultural, and spiritual - and showed how in his work such a program achieved an improvement in 72% of the patients treated.⁴⁴

Altshuler, in his smaller groups, was attempting to employ some psychoanalytic principles along lines that Louis Wender had been working with as early as 1930. Wender found that group psychotherapy was not only a valuable aid to individual therapy but that it made a significant contribution in itself by helping patients to achieve social reorientation. He felt that neuroses and psychoses were produced by conflicts growing out of the inability of

43. Ibid., 232.

44. Cf. Ira M. Altshuler, "One Year's Experience with Group Psychotherapy," Mental Hygiene, 24 (April, 1940), 190-96.

an individual to find his place in a complex society where mores called for difficult repressions and adaptations. By working through emotional difficulties and achieving adjustments in a small group of six or eight the individual was then better able to face the larger world. The experience became one in which the patient not only learned to understand his emotional reactions but in a sort of social living laboratory he was able to try out his new insights.

In summarizing his work at Hastings-on-Hudson, New York,⁴⁵ Wender stressed the part played by indirect references where resistance was lowered and hence insight was reached more quickly. He showed how transference of patient to therapist was speeded up through identification with another patient who was already in good rapport with the therapist. The transference, moreover, became a patient-to-patient one so that the relationship took an outward course leading to wider areas of interest and thus to more normal socialization. He found, too, that group interaction provided a reliving of the family situation with great cathartic values. The patient could rebel against the therapist who might represent his father or against the other group members who might stand for his siblings with-

45. Cf. Louis Wender, "Dynamics of Group Psychotherapy and its Application," Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 84 (July, 1936), 54-60.

out any feeling of guilt or anxiety. Wender noted the real value of the interacting group where each member had the opportunity of being an equal and acceptable member and where each could evaluate his own problems against those of the others. A letter written to Wender by a former patient described the effectiveness of the group interaction.

I found myself tending to apply those general principles and causes behind emotional conflicts to myself.. My early rebelliousness and resentments, as well as my conviction of personal uniqueness, gave way to the revelation that I was not much different from others. I began, with a certain feeling of exultation, to realize that there was a full body of scientific knowledge which could be constructively applied to my ailment, as it had been and was, daily, being applied successfully to countless others.⁴⁶

An emphasis made by Wender on the therapeutic values of recreation and occupational therapy in a group setting was further amplified by Drs. Davis and Dunton. Casual contacts in craft activity or in games have often been the starting point for the socializing process that is so definitely needed for restoration to health. In recreational activities where the patients identified themselves with group enterprises, strong stabilizing forces were built up that enhanced self-respect and kindled a feeling of accom-

46. Noted by Louis Wender, "Group Psychotherapy: A Study of its Application," The Psychiatric Quarterly, 14 (October, 1940), 717.

plishment in a successful joint activity.⁴⁷ The writer has seen withdrawn patients take on new interest and start making good progress after voluntary participation in a series of volley-ball games.⁴⁸ In the case of one particularly isolated patient who had remained constantly by himself and had seldom spoken on his own initiative, the volley-ball game so commanded his interest that he identified himself completely with his team and was soon shouting instructions and criticisms to his team-mates.

Group activities for former mental patients, as recommended by Marsh and as practiced by Wender, have been particularly successful in the organization known as "Recovery, Inc.," a development from Dr. A. A. Low's group therapy work at the Psychiatric Institute of the University of Illinois Medical School in Chicago. The organization was developed in 1937 with the purpose of reducing relapses into mental disease and of combating chronic psychoneurotic conditions. The group met three times a week, once in a member's home, once with Dr. Low, and once in an open meeting at the Recovery Office where relatives and friends were present. The meetings were designed to convey confidence, to convince the members of their own power to remain healthy

47. Cf. John E. Davis and William R. Dunton, Jr., Principles and Practice of Recreational Therapy for the Mentally Ill (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1936), 160.

48. Boston Psychopathic Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts, June, 1947.

and to discipline the members to assume or at least share the responsibility for their illness. Lectures, discussions, and testimonies were used with good success. Recovery, Inc., was but another instance of the value of the group approach in dealing effectively with problems that defy individual help. An interesting aspect of the organization was the support given to each other by the members. If an individual felt his symptoms returning he was instructed to contact a fellow member who would function as the physician's aid in lending support. Similar in many ways to Recovery, Inc., is Alcoholics Anonymous, an organization which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Two other significant workers in the field of mental illness might be noted. Trigant Burrow⁴⁹ and his associates began in 1927 to develop a method called Phyloanalysis which sought to study human reactions in the group. Burrow's interest in group psychotherapy arose out of his idea that social images are forced by society upon an individual which conflict with his natural course of action and hinder natural adjustment. He saw the problem as social rather than as individual and so approached it through group psychoanalysis. In the later development of phyloanalysis, however, Burrow has become less interested in therapy than in the development

49. "The Group Method of Analysis," Psychoanalytic Review, 14 (July, 1927), 268-80.

of his particular ideas.

Paul Schilder has made significant contributions to group psychotherapy from a classical analytic approach. His method will be summarized in the next chapter as a contemporary example of the analytic viewpoint. He has consistently stressed the need for supplementing and complementing group work with individual therapy. A major emphasis in his work was in the reliving of an experience as it was discussed in the group. As secrecy was removed from underlying motivations, the patient was better able to make a more satisfactory adjustment to the existing conditions.⁵⁰ The group treatment was an effective aid in removing this secrecy and in providing the medium for a reliving of the experience.

4. THE DEVELOPMENT WITH MORE-THAN-VERBAL METHODS

The foregoing account helps to make it clear that group psychotherapy has not had a logical continuous development but has rather been introduced by many therapists in different situations to meet different needs. The development of two lines of work has been suggested, one stemming from Dr. Pratt's work in a medical clinic and the other dealing with mental hospital patients. These two lines

⁵⁰. Cf. Paul Schilder, "Introductory Remarks on Groups," Journal of Social Psychology, 12 (August, 1940), 83-100.

have converged in the work of men like Hadden and Marsh. There is still a third line of development which is becoming increasingly more significant and which has developed concurrently with the other two. It is the work of Dr. J. L. Moreno who shares with Dr. Pratt the distinction of being the founder of group psychotherapy. Moreno is credited with being the first to use the term "group psychotherapy" to describe his approach to the problem of interpersonal relations.⁵¹ Moreno's distinctive contribution to group psychotherapy has been in his insistence on the need for understanding dynamic group structure and in his use of more-than-verbal methods.

In Vienna about 1909 Moreno began working with children using a method which is now known as psychodrama. He sought to treat the problems of children through extemporaneous acting.⁵² He encouraged children to play out their problems spontaneously with such good success that after urging by parents and teachers he left the Vienna Meadow Garden where the activities had centered and opened a Theater for Spontaneity for children and adolescents in 1911. A further development of the same method was the establish-

51. Cf. Joseph I. Meiers, "Origins and Development of Group Psychotherapy, Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 261-63.

52. Cf. J. L. Moreno, Psychodrama (New York: Beacon House, 1946), I, 3.

ment in Vienna in 1921 of a spontaneity theater for adults called the "Stegreif Theater." By this time Moreno had discovered the therapeutic values in psychodrama and had applied it to the treatment of mental patients.

Psychodrama is spontaneous action among persons in which conflicts are re-enacted and repressions are released in a mock society. Under the guise of drama a person is given the opportunity of re-living emotional experiences in an atmosphere in which any attitude may be expressed without the fear of social disapproval. Moreno pointed out that psychodrama was the pivotal point in a turning from the treatment of the individual by verbal methods to the treatment of the individual in groups by action methods.⁵³ Although recognizing the influence of psychoanalysis on his thinking, Moreno claimed that psychodrama was based on a theory of personality and a theory of the group which went beyond psychoanalysis in depth and in scope, as well as being more economical.

Early in his work Moreno became interested in studying the emotional patterns within a group. This study into the dynamic structure of groups he called sociometry. His original interest was developed in Vienna about 1911 when he sought to meet the problem of prostitution in that city

53. Ibid., I, 10.

by forming self-help groups which were initiated and run by the girls themselves. Instead of trying to reform the girls he sought to utilize dynamic factors within the group to realize the desired goal. The result of the change from a symbolic status as an outcast to the personal status within the group led to highly desirable results.

The significance of Moreno's work has become better recognized since he came to the United States in 1927. Since then his psychodrama has been rather widely adopted, especially in psychiatric treatment. Psychodrama theaters have been built at Beacon, New York (1936), at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D. C. (1940), and in New York City at the Psychodramatic Institute (1942). His interest in sociometry has continued⁵⁴ in America and has led to intensive studies of therapeutic groupings at Sing Sing Prison and at the New York Training School for Girls. Through diagnosis of interpersonal relations among the population of such institutions, individuals were grouped together scientifically rather than haphazardly with very effective therapeutic results. A cottage plan was utilized in the girls' school whereby the girls were grouped into intimate cottage units according to their needs. Reorganization of the units was carried out when therapeutic pur-

54. Cf. J. L. Moreno, Who Shall Survive? (Washington Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1934).

poses indicated it. Moreno referred to the use of such a plan in the Benedictine monasteries where sociometric assignment was made as monks were transferred from one group to another.⁵⁵

Moreno has undoubtedly made great contributions to group psychotherapy in showing the value of living through conflicts in a make believe situation. When his methods were applied to social rather than to personal problems a whole new method of education was instituted under the name of sociodrama. It is to be questioned, however, if Moreno's techniques are as all-inclusive as he claims. He believes that psychodrama gathers together all other forms of psychotherapy and that it is the best method available. He claims that

It can be adapted to every type of problem, personal or group, of children or adults. It can be applied to every age level. Problems in the nursery as well as the deepest psychic conflicts can be brought nearer solution by its aid.⁵⁶

The particular method used in psychodrama will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter.

Another leading exponent of action therapy was S. R. Slavson who worked with problem children through the Jewish Board of Guardians in New York City. Slavson emphasized

55. Cf. J. L. Moreno, Discussion of "Proposal of a Plan of Group Psychotherapy," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 38-39.

56. J. L. Moreno, Psychodrama, I, 177.

the value of group experience in modifying or eliminating egocentricity and the feeling of psychological isolation.⁵⁷ He began his work in 1934 by putting rejected and "spoiled" children into groups where they were given opportunity to experience actual situations through which a new orientation could be achieved. The children's groups were wholly autonomous with a minimum of adult supervision of activity. Slavson stressed the need of children for experiencing release of aggressions and hostilities in a permissive atmosphere and then of re-establishing superior patterns and feeling tones which were acceptable ones. The major incentive for improvement in the therapy group Slavson noted as the desire to be accepted by the group. The specific method used by Slavson will be indicated in the next chapter.

Dr. Laurette Bender has also found group activity to be the most successful way of helping abnormal children by giving opportunity for full play of aggressive or affectionate impulses and the resolution of emotional complexes. She used puppet projects in which the children could identify themselves with the puppet characters in many situations. All sorts of problems could be represented with puppets and solutions given. The children, too, could express their aggressions openly by reviling or encouraging

57. Cf. Slavson, An Introduction to Group Therapy, 1.

the characters with no fear of punishment. Music projects such as rhythm bands were also used to good advantage, for in such a situation the children received training through directed play which gave them a feeling of accomplishment and set a pattern for accepted social activity. Art projects, supervised play, shop work - all done in a group situation - allowed for expressions of aggression and competition. In group discussions the children found relief through learning how common their problems were and in finding the satisfactions of social approval. Dr. Bender stated her position in these words:

I am quite convinced myself that group treatment is not only the most economic way but is the correct way, because the children of the latency period are essentially social beings and their problems are social problems, and they can be handled better in groups.⁵⁸

This brief survey of the historical development of scientific group psychotherapy has pointed out the situations in which the principles and values of this method of treatment have evolved. It has shown the concrete situations in which the forces of intensification, interaction, transference, and identification have come to light and it has shown how the group has provided for enlarged confidence, socialization, re-education, and a laboratory in social liv-

58. Laurette Bender, "Group Activities on a Children's Ward as Methods of Psychotherapy," The American Journal of Psychiatry, 93 (March, 1937), 1173. Cf. also Virginia Mae Axline, Play Therapy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), for a more complete study of play therapy.

ing. These group dynamics have been found to some degree in all of the different types of therapy groups and they can be found working to some extent in any group. With an understanding of what they are and with a knowledge of how they have been used in scientific circles, the church has the opportunity of using them for therapeutic purposes in its own program. For a better understanding of how these dynamics have been employed, the next chapter deals with several specific methods.

CHAPTER FIVE

ILLUSTRATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES IN GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY

1. CLASSIFICATION

Having traced the emergence of the dynamics operating in group therapy, the next step is to describe the specific methods being used by representative therapists today. Classification of group therapy work is difficult due in part to the complex nature of group psychology and in part to the lack of complete knowledge about group dynamics. Moreover, since the therapeutic goals vary greatly, a difference in method is to be expected. A listing of the goals in therapy has been given as follows:

1. Guidance and practical advice
2. Education or orientation
3. Spiritual strength and fellowship
4. Socialization
5. Catharsis or abreaction
6. Freeing of associations and production of deeper material for analysis
7. Symptomatic relief
8. Adaptation to reality
9. Insight into conflicts
10. Character or personality modification ¹

These goals are listed in the order of increasing intensity and thoroughness. A profound character modification is obviously something entirely different from simple guidance

1. Burchard, E. M. L., J. J. Michaels, and B. Kotkov, "Criteria for Evaluation of Group Therapy," Unpublished Manuscript.

and thus the goal of treatment determines in part at least the method used. A statement of the goal is helpful in understanding a specific type of therapy, but it does not describe the method nor does it indicate its value. Although, generally speaking, the therapy which uses psychoanalytic principles is the most intensive and the most lasting, this fact does not detract from the value of the other types. It is of interest to note in passing that the intensity of therapy varies in inverse proportion to the size of the group.

Group therapy methods can be classified roughly into two major divisions: 1) verbal and intellectualizing methods and 2) more-than-verbal methods. The first division can be further classified into three parts: a) the spiritual approach, b) the intellectual approach, and c) the analytic approach.² The spiritual approach is largely emotional with a strong exhortative appeal based on faith and suggestion. Dr. Moore, in describing the trends in psychotherapy, referred to this emphasis as repressive and inspirational (as opposed to the analytic),³ terms that are well chosen in describing the method. The patient is urged to exercise

2. Cf. Charles N. Sarlin and Martin A. Berezin, "Group Psychotherapy on a Modified Analytic Basis," The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 104 (December, 1946), 612.

3. Cf. Merrill Moore, "The Practice of Psychiatry," Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin, 16 (April, 1942), 56.

control over himself, to suppress thoughts that are asocial, negative, or worrisome, and to find an absorbing interest or inspiration through participation in outgoing activities. It is obvious that the emphasis in most church groups is of this sort. Christian Science stresses especially the repressive element. Alcoholics Anonymous falls in this classification and will be described as an example of contemporary practice. In this area the therapists have been largely non-medical persons.

The intellectual approach is the most widely used method of psychotherapy and has played the largest part in group therapy in the past. The premise in this method is that understanding helps a person to solve his emotional problems. This method, which has been used with considerable success, has shown that symptoms can be influenced by applying reason and intelligence to emotional conflicts. Mention has already been made of Lazell's series of lectures which are directed toward this general goal of social re-education of attitudes and emotional drives. J. W. Klapman puts a series of lectures at the center of his group therapy work in a mental hospital.⁴ The intellectual approach was used widely in the armed services during the war, a good example of it being found in the work of Sherman which is given below.

4. Cf. Klapman, Group Psychotherapy: Theory and Practice, 201-35.

A combination of the spiritual and the intellectual approaches is vividly illustrated in the Classes in Applied Psychology which are developments of Dr. Pratt's Thought Control Class at the Boston Dispensary. A whole chapter is given below to these classes as examples of a contemporary emphasis.

The analytic approach sees all emotional problems as the result of unconscious conflict and so seeks access to unconscious mechanisms with the aim of reorganizing the personality. As repressions are loosed the libido is freed so that it can find expression in more suitable ways. Such therapy is generally in the hands of psychoanalytically trained psychiatrists. Paul Schilder's methodology is described below as being the most thoroughly Freudian of the analytic group. Because of his leadership in the field of group psychotherapy, his method has been chosen for description of contemporary work even though he died in 1940.

Although these three approaches are listed separately in order to point up the different emphases, in reality it is difficult to distinguish one type clearly from another. Dr. Giles Thomas has expressed in a graphic manner the relationship between the repressive and inspirational approach and the analytic approach. Figure 1 shows how there is a bit of the repressive-inspirational in the analytic methods and vice-versa.

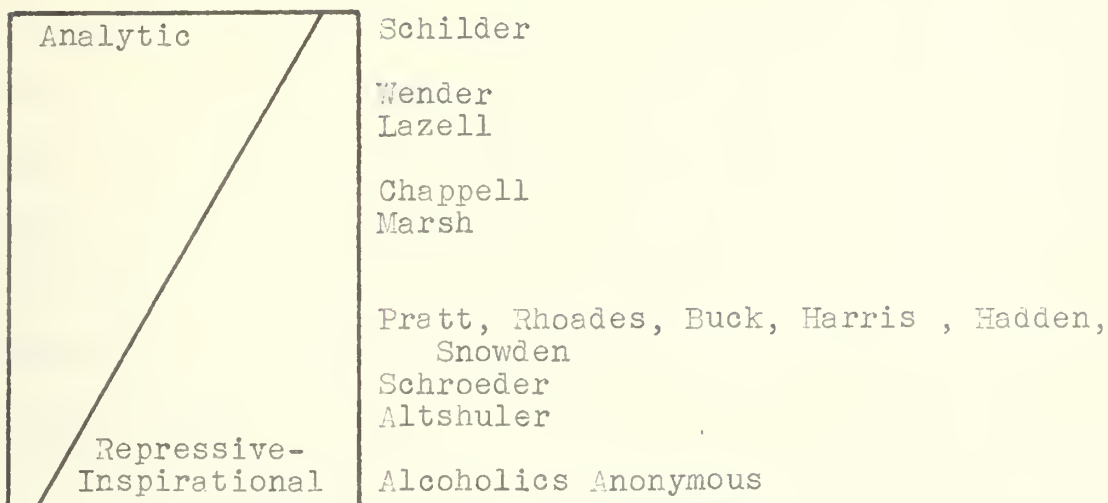


FIGURE 1

PRACTICING THERAPISTS LISTED BY EMPHASIS AS PREDOMINANTLY REPRESSIVE-INSPIRATIONAL OR PREDOMINANTLY ANALYTIC (5)

Thomas's chart is helpful as far as it goes, but its limitation is in listing only the verbal methods.

The second major division, the more-than-verbal methods, includes the techniques that go beyond verbalization and intellectualization to include non-verbal patterns of action. Moreno's psychodrama is explained below and the method is illustrated in contemporary usage with servicemen and veterans. Slavson's activity-therapy is given as a further example of a more-than-verbal method.

It is to be noted that none of these methods are wholly exclusive. Klapman feels strongly that to use the

5. Giles W. Thomas, "Group Psychotherapy: A Review of the Recent Literature," Psychosomatic Medicine, 5 (April, 1943), 168.

same method in every situation and with each patient is foolish. Just as the physician alters his approach with individual patients, so the group therapist needs to be skilled in all methods and to use the one which best fits the needs.⁶ The description of these different methods according to the plan of the classification suggested is the next task.

2. METHODS OF VERBALIZATION

The Spiritual Approach of Alcoholics Anonymous

One of the most successful of contemporary efforts at group therapy is found in an organization of former alcoholics whose work is carried out completely outside of medical circles. This organization, known as Alcoholics Anonymous, is classified as having a spiritual approach since the appeal is largely emotional. Faith in a higher power plays a significant role, and constructive usefulness in helping other alcoholics is one of the goals.

Unlike most of the other therapy groups dealt with, Alcoholics Anonymous, or A.A. as it is commonly called, has a membership of fifty per-cent so-called "normal" people, the other half being more or less pronounced neurot-

6. Cf. Klapman, Group Psychotherapy, 71.

ics.⁷ This membership numbering well over 12,000 is grouped into some 385 units in America and Canada.⁸ These members are reclaimed alcoholics, men and women who are bound together in an informal fellowship for the one purpose of staying sober and of helping any sick alcoholic recover if he wishes. Membership is open to anyone who is willing to admit that he is an alcoholic, that is one who admits he cannot stop drinking and who sincerely wants to stop. Becoming a member he is asked at first only to attend the regular weekly meetings and, guided by the advice and experience of others in the group, to follow out the prescribed principles.

A description of a specific meeting makes the procedure more vivid. Attending a regular weekly meeting⁹ the visitor found an attractive group of normal appearing middle class people. It was a representative group, a cross section of all ages and of several walks of life. It was an animated group with men and women talking and joking together in an atmosphere of comfortable informality. On the walls were three posters carrying the mottoes of the

7. Cf. "Basic Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous," Medicine Looks at Alcoholics Anonymous (P. O. Box 459, New York: The Alcoholic Foundation, Inc., 1944), 3.

8. Cf. Alcoholics Anonymous (New York: Works Publishing, Inc., 1945), 25.

9. The meeting described was visited by the writer at Uphams Corner, Boston, on April 26, 1947.

organization: "FIRST THINGS FIRST ," "LIVE AND LET LIVE ," and "EASY DOES IT." Just before the meeting started chances were sold on a book, Alcoholics Anonymous,¹⁰ the book that is recommended reading for all members and any others interested. The money taken in from the selling of the chances took the place of dues and provided for operating expenses of mailing and of renting the room. The meeting started with introductions of visiting members and with recognition of some of the guests - including a clergyman. For the next hour and a half several members were called on to speak. The chairman of the meeting started it off with a detailed description of his former drinking habits and of the tragedies that drink had brought to his life. He went on to tell of his first contacts with A. A., of the change that had come into his life, of his present freedom from the habit of alcohol. He made it clear that religion meant very little to him, but that his cure had started when he had recognized a need for help from some power greater than himself. He concluded his talk with the clear recognition on his part that he can never take another drink - that a drink is all right for the other fellow, but not for him. The other several speakers told their life stories in somewhat the same manner, but always from a very personal viewpoint. Because the accounts were

10. Op. cit.

so vivid, so close to life, so spontaneously told, they were fascinating, and a deep sincerity and earnestness was apparent in every case. From the various speakers the basic teachings of A. A. began to emerge.

There are twelve steps in the Alcoholics Anonymous Program for Recovery, and although the program is only a suggestion, it is strongly recommended as a specific, progressive plan for the new member. The steps are as follows:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives have become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual experience as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.¹¹

The basic emphasis in these steps lies in an admission of

11. Alcoholics Anonymous, 71-72.

the need for help, a willingness to analyze one's personality and adjust personal relations, a dependence upon a higher power, and a readiness to work with other alcoholics.

These principles are not new. They are tried and tested principles of psychiatry and religion which the doctor and the clergyman have been telling the alcoholic about for a long time without any success. The difference in A. A. is that here is an organization which creates a little society in which the alcoholic finds people of his own kind who testify to him of how these principles, and these alone, have proved to be effective. The pressure of testimony after testimony leaves no doubt in the mind of the newcomer. Here are men and women who have gone through the very same hell that he is in but have come back up and out. Here is a group where for the first time in years he feels at home and does not need to make excuses for himself. Here he feels wanted, understood, useful - and he knows he can get well because the people who have just spoken were in worse shape than he is.

The strong religious emphasis in A. A. is a stumbling block to many newcomers at first, but not for long. Obviously, the people that speak in the meetings are not religious in the orthodox sense of the word. Many of them admit to

having been agnostics or atheists at one time,¹² but without exception they insist on the spiritual emphasis if they are to stay dry. They can't do it by themselves. Coming from a minister this would mean little; coming from a brother alcoholic it means everything. The interpretation of what that higher power may be is not dealt with. It is enough to say that some power greater than man has to enter the picture. To the average person this means getting religion, and it comes very close to being a religious conversion. William James' classic definition of religious conversion is equally applicable to the alcoholic who has accepted A. A.'s program: "the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities."¹³ The psychiatrist describes it as a basic change in the character structure from the narcissistic, egocentric person of defiant individuality and grandiosity, a pattern typical of the alcoholic and one which he maintains at all cost, to a person who accepts inwardly and without resentment the

12. About half the members. Cf. "Basic Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous," Medicine Looks at Alcoholics Anonymous, 9.

13. William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1902), 189.

help, guidance and control of a power greater than himself. The psychiatrist finds it hard to explain the change, but he confirms it.¹⁴ The emotional force of religion is used to achieve a result which is fully as satisfactory as that achieved by most treatments through long psychoanalysis. The religious note was introduced by the founder of the organization who attributes his recovery to the teaching and help of a former alcoholic crony who had achieved sobriety through the Oxford Group.¹⁵ The influence of Buchmanism is seen further in the insistence on righting past wrongs in order to reduce inner conflicts and in the group fellowship which gives opportunity for sympathetic mutual discussion and thus aids in relieving complexes, repressions, and self-condemnation.

The basic writing, Alcoholics Anonymous, refers to the individual organizations as "fellowships,"¹⁶ and the word is well chosen. A. A. is more than individual therapy. It is truly group therapy, for it is interaction with members of the group that accomplishes the results. Not only is there a therapeutic suggestion of cure in asso-

14. Cf. Harry M. Tiebout, "Therapeutic Mechanism of Alcoholics Anonymous," The American Journal of Psychiatry, 100 (January, 1944), 469.

15. Cf. Loc. Cit.

16. 397.

ciating with those who are becoming well but there is also a new and compelling interest in life that comes from association with those who have obligated themselves to be of help to other sufferers. One of the cardinal points in A. A. is the readiness of its members, twenty-four hours every day, to go to the support of an alcoholic who wants help. One of the originators of A. A. writes:

The opportunity to work with alcoholics means everything; to most of us it means life itself. Without the chance to forget our own troubles by helping others out of theirs, we would certainly perish.¹⁷ That is the heart of A. A. - - it is our life-blood.

New members are given names with addresses and telephone numbers of all the members of the local group. Everyone on the list is a potential friend. Everyone stands ready to answer a call for help.

These principles and emphases became apparent as the meeting progressed. Before the session came to a close, the entire group stood and repeated together the Lord's Prayer. It was done as a sort of group acknowledgment of the part that a Higher Power plays in their lives. When the meeting was over many lingered to talk together of triumphs and defeats. The atmosphere throughout the meeting was one which served to inspire confidence and renew hope. Critical though the psychiatric therapist may be

17. "Basic Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous," Medicine Looks at Alcoholics Anonymous, 8.

of the spiritual approach, in terms of results he is compelled to acknowledge good success. A. A. is commended by Dr. Roscoe Hall as he remarks: "(It has) a better batting average than any medical group with which I happen to be familiar."¹⁸

The Intellectual Approach of Sherman

The intellectual approach, carried out largely by lectures and discussion, stresses the didactic element. Where many patients have similar symptoms and problems growing out of experiences shared in common, the approach has proved to be not only time saving but also quite effective. It does not aim at a complete cure, but it does strive to help a patient adjust to circumstances more effectively. The military service provides a particularly good field for this approach and we find that the method has been used rather widely in all branches of the service.

A common sense form of group therapy along intellectual lines was used on some of the regular morning sick calls where the symptoms of one patient would be discussed and explained by the doctor in the presence of others exhibiting similar difficulties. More organized efforts,

18. "Introductory Remarks" (as Chairman of Conference on Group Psychotherapy), Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 43.

however, were used by many doctors who sought in series of talks to deal in an educational and reassuring way with such topics as anger, fear, repression, rationalization, and the physiological effects of emotion. The work of Dr. Stephen Sherman in dealing with war neuroses of merchant seamen is somewhat typical of contemporary military practice.

Sherman stresses the significance of the didactic element. "Many psychiatrists," he says, "...would affirm that the power of the intellect has not received sufficient respect in psychotherapy and that it should be more fully exploited."¹⁹ Confronted by the problem of acquainting seamen in two to four weeks with the nature of their illness - - war nerves or convoy fatigue - - he decided to give a series of simple lectures. He explains his idea in these words:

It was felt that if the seaman could know something of what he was dealing with, of the way in which the forces within himself operated for good or ill particularly in wartime, this knowledge...would work therapeutically to liberate him from the neurosis.²⁰

The lectures began with a physiological emphasis showing the effects on the physical organism of the emotional state of fear. Several lectures dealt with the psychological factors that enter the situation in order to make clear the

19. Stephen Sherman, "A System of Combined Individual and Group Therapy as Used in the Medical Program for Merchant Seamen," American Journal of Psychiatry, 100 (July, 1943), 127-30.

20. Ibid., 128.

relationship between physiological functions and emotional states.

These lectures proved to be very successful in imparting helpful information. The seamen quickly learned how their reactions were common to those of many others. It was not necessary to take the doctor's word for it because sitting on the next bench was a man with similar symptoms wearing a Navy Cross whose courage was unquestioned. The physiological explanation helped them to realize that their symptoms reflected no discredit upon them, that the symptoms were merely nature's way of protecting the human being. Sherman found that the larger group could be broken down into smaller groups of six or seven for less formal discussion after the preliminary lectures. In these smaller groups the method tended toward the analytic approach.

The Analytic Approach of Schilder

The third approach, the analytic, is the most intensive form of treatment and is best illustrated in the work of the late Paul Schilder of the Bellevue Hospital Psychiatric Division. Working from a basically Freudian point of view, Schilder combines individual and group therapy in attempting to produce basic personality changes. He meets his patients first in typical individual psychoanalytic interviews where the life history is learned and the principles

of free association and dream interpretation are taught. After several such sessions in which the patient gains some preliminary insight, he is then asked to write out a detailed autobiography, in which he passes in review the whole of his life with particular emphasis being given to family relationships and sexual development. The patient then joins a group of from two to six others which meets once a week for a session that may last as long as three hours. The group sessions are supplemented by two additional weekly interviews. The patient continues in the group until: 1) his symptoms are gone, 2) a good social adaptation has been achieved, and 3) a good insight has been gained into the origin and character of the disturbances.

Schilder strives to create the atmosphere in the group of a common search for better adjustment to reality. The therapist has the role of a leader in directing the search, but rather than being an authority with final and complete knowledge he takes his place in the group as a fellow human being who is confronted by similar problems. The atmosphere is thus not that of a formal classroom but instead is more like a friendly, informal club with interested people discussing common problems. The discussion is generally started by having one of the patients present a part of his autobiographical report. Proceeding as in

individual psychoanalysis, the therapist interprets from time to time by pointing out and clarifying psychological mechanisms as they appear. He helps, too, in relating present feelings to previous infantile situations. He is not the only interpreter, however, for the other group members are encouraged to add their interpretations and to relate similar or associated experiences of their own, and in this free flow of ideas resembling free association, a good bit of unconscious material comes to light. Through spontaneous discussion the underlying emotional trends and related anxieties are exposed bit by bit as evasions and rationalizations are pointed out by the group. The therapist plays the role of a catalyst in aiding in the release of repressed feelings and in stimulating the interpersonal relations among the patients. The transference relationship exists more among the patients than it does between patient and therapist.

In the course of the group sessions it soon becomes apparent that there is an underlying identity of the problems presented by the individual patients. As patients recognize their own problems in the discussion of some one else, their feeling of isolation is reduced. Their own problem becomes less intensely personal and can be viewed with more objectivity as having the dignity of a rather uni-

versal difficulty.²¹ The basic human problems which must be mastered with emotional and intellectual insight are grouped as follows:

1. Body and beauty
2. Health, strength, efficiency, superiority and inferiority in a physical sense
3. Aggressiveness and submission
4. Masculinity and femininity
5. The relation of sex and love
6. The expectation for the future
7. The meaning of death²²

Attitudes toward these basic problems, developed into ideologies, may be faulty or immature. In the group discussions these basic concepts are analyzed and immature fixations that have retarded development are discussed. The discussions are based on concrete experiences in the life of the individual so that the experiences are re-lived. A new adaptation is possible only after the concrete situation is dealt with.

Only when the individual dives down into his personal experiences or brings them forward in the group (does) the crystallized individual development come into a flux again which allows a new adaptation to the situation.²³

Great stress is placed by Schilder on the gaining of

21. Cf. Paul Schilder, "The Analysis of Ideologies as a Psychotherapeutic Method, Especially in Group Treatment," American Journal of Psychiatry, 93 (November, 1936), 612.

22. Ibid., 614-15.

23. Paul Schilder, "Introductory Remarks on Groups," Journal of Social Psychology, 12 (August, 1940), 94.

insight. "The final aim of psychotherapy," he says, "can only be insight...It means the ability to see the structures of the real world and to act accordingly."²⁴ The individual needs to gain insight into his social and psychosexual adaptation. He needs to understand his libidinal fixations, to make unconscious material conscious and to understand his own needs and wishes. He needs to know himself better, to understand his development in the past, his ideologies of the present, and his expectations for the future. When present and future behavior is no longer arbitrarily predetermined by the old values of past experiences, then the patient is said to have acquired insight.²⁵ To help the patient to understand himself better Schilder has worked out several detailed questionnaires which guide the therapist in getting at fundamental problems. These questions ask for opinions and convictions as well as for memories, phantasies, and associations. They deal with such areas as: relation to other persons, relation to one's body, relation to one's body functions; attitude toward one's own self, one's social functions and rela-

24. Schilder, "Results and Problems of Group Psychotherapy in Severe Neuroses," Mental Hygiene, 23 (January, 1939), 89.

25. Cf. Howard Rome, "Psychopathology and Group Therapy," Military Neuropsychiatry (Baltimore: The Williams & Wilkins Company, 1946), 165.

tions, and one's attitudes toward aggression and death.²⁶ The group situation is of help in gaining insight into problems in these areas, for since the problems arose originally in a group, the group interaction can be utilized in living out early emotional fixations. The group provides an actual social reality in which immature impulses are brought to life. New and better modes of action can be tried out in a specific social setting and thus personality growth is encouraged.

3. MORE-THAN-VERBAL METHODS

Psychodrama by Moreno

Schilder's method stresses the emotional reliving of past experiences but primarily on a verbal level. In the second major classification of group therapy methods, the more-than-verbal techniques, we find a more vivid method of living out previous experiences by adding pre-verbal communication (as in gestures) to the more usual tools of verbalization and intellectualization. Moreno's psychodrama is the more-than-verbal method commonly used with adults. In psychodrama, interpersonal relations are given a highly significant recognition, for although it is a method of treatment focused on the individual, it is carried out in a

26. Cf. Schilder, Psychotherapy (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1938), 204-55.

group situation which attempts to recreate incidents of emotional significance in the patient's life. The exact incident is created in as dramatic a way as is possible by having several persons assist in acting out the roles of all those involved. The setting of the psychodrama is a specially designed theater which has a circular stage with three different levels. The lower levels are used for a preliminary warming up process in which the patient, with the help of the therapist, tries to act out a situation spontaneously. The actual psychodrama takes place generally on the upper level. Moreno uses a balcony for a fourth level for acting out superhuman phantasies (e. g. playing God). The audience consists of other patients with similar problems who gain vicarious catharsis as they watch the activity on the stage.

Moreno uses psychodrama both for diagnosis and for treatment. In spontaneous acting many unconscious feelings are readily detected by the therapist and so more accurate diagnosis is possible. The patient is more readily his real self when he is acting than when he is merely engaged in an interview. It is in treatment, however, that psychodrama plays an even larger part. The subject who comes for treatment is one whose difficulties are bound together with conflicts which have developed between him and some other persons. It is explained to him that he is to act out sit-

uations from the past in which he has been emotionally involved with other persons. Assistants called auxiliary egos are available to play whatever role the patient directs. They are therapeutic agents who provide whatever assistance he needs. They are auxiliary to him, they take their lead from him. The patient carries out whatever situation he desires, but he is encouraged to duplicate it in all of its details. For example, he might act out an incident in the life of his family in which several members of the family are involved. After each scene the therapist analyzes the situation and the performance in the presence of the patient and with his collaboration. When a number of incidents have been enacted it becomes apparent to the therapist that certain scenes and certain roles are avoided as being painful. The therapist then steps in and tells the patient what situation should be played and what roles should be taken.²⁷

In this spontaneous dramatization of emotionally charged situations several therapeutic mechanisms are at work.²⁸ There is a materialization of phantasies, fears, and anxieties so that the patient can understand them better, face them and overcome them. There is a complete catharsis

27. Cf. Moreno, Psychodrama, I, 183.

28. Cf. Ernest Fantel, "Psychodrama in an Evacuation Hospital," Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 367, for a brief presentation of these mechanisms.

in re-living the experience. There is a gain in insight as the patient obtains a synoptic view of his difficulty and is aided by the therapist in seeing the mechanisms of his own mind at work. There is a training and adaptation for real life as the patient tries out new attitudes in a mock society which is free from personal harm or ridicule.

Psychodrama is being used to considerable extent in military hospitals. It serves the purpose of "facing, acting out and desensitizing problems that are generally traumatic to patients in the groups."²⁹ Thus, for example, experiences in combat are relived with a great display of emotion and an obvious lessening of inward pressure. Another very successful use of psychodrama has been in acting out difficult interpersonal relations and social problems which convalescing patients can anticipate meeting. Thus a soldier about to be discharged acts out the events of the first day as a civilian as he foresees them. He is given ample support by auxiliary egos so that there is no chance for failure, and through meeting the make-believe situation successfully he is better prepared for the actual problem in real society.³⁰

29. John Cotton, "The Psychiatric Treatment Program at Welch Convalescent Hospital," Ebaugh, editor, Military Neuropsychiatry, 319.

30. Cf. Frances Herriott, "Some Uses of Psychodrama at St. Elizabeth's Hospital," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 54-57.

A variation of psychodrama that holds considerable promise is found in its educational use, and although this can scarcely be considered to be strictly group therapy it is still significant enough to be mentioned. Hogan and Wright³¹ tell of using psychodrama in training psychiatric social workers by acting out scenes that represented typical situations. The reactions of different persons to the same situation formed the basis of the teaching. Lippitt tells of using the same technique for helping members of a professional conference to see how they could best benefit from the meeting.³² Similar procedures have been utilized by progressive church groups in demonstrating, for example, to lay workers the most effective way of conducting evangelistic campaigns.

Activity Therapy by Slavson

Another more-than-verbal technique in group therapy has been developed with excellent results in treating children and adolescents with personality problems. S. R.

31. Cf. Margaret Hogan and Edith Wright, "Psychodramatic Techniques as a Teaching Device in an Accelerated Course for Workers with Neuropsychiatric Patients," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 146-50.

32. Cf. Ronald Lippitt, Leland P. Bradford and Kenneth D. Benne, "Sociodramatic Clarification of Leader and Group Roles, as a Starting Point for Effective Group Functioning," Sociatry, 1 (March, 1947), 82-91.

Slavson has done the most exhaustive work in this field and so the methods used by him at the Jewish Board of Guardians in New York City will be outlined. His work has been with children between nine and eighteen years old whose personality problems have become apparent in delinquent or neurotic behavior which had resulted in either individual or social maladjustment. For such children group therapy has been prescribed if diagnosis by a psychiatrist and study by a social case worker indicated the need for help in interpersonal relations. Slavson realizes the value of group interaction for all children³³ but uses group therapy as specific treatment for special needs recognizing that some children are inaccessible to group treatment. A report of a committee of case workers at the Jewish Board of Guardians listed the purposes for which children were referred to the Group Therapy Department as follows:

1. Social experience
 - a) to gain social experience
 - b) to gain security in relation to children
 - c) to gain security in relation to adults
 - d) to develop personal security: status, acceptance, self-confidence
2. Observation
 - a) differential diagnosis
 - b) teaching progress of individual treatment
3. Development of group relations outside the family
4. Utilization of personality traits in constructive fashion
 - a) aggressive personality
 - b) withdrawn personality
5. Providing opportunity for self-expression

33. Cf. Slavson, An Introduction to Group Therapy, xi.

6. Parents being treated
7. Tapering off treatment
8. Supplementing case work treatment³⁴

A boy recommended for group therapy is assigned to a group sponsored by the agency near his home. He receives a letter which mentions the name of the case worker whom he knows and which invites him to attend a club in his neighborhood. Besides giving information about time, place, leader and transportation, the invitation includes a sentence that describes the club's activities in words something like this:

The boys work with all kinds of material like wood, paints, and copper, play games, have delicious refreshments, and go on outings and trips.³⁵

When the boys arrive at the first meeting they find materials, tools, and individual and group games set out on large tables. Each newcomer is greeted in a warm, friendly manner by the leader-therapist, but beyond introducing himself the therapist takes no other initiative. If the boy asks about procedures he is simply told that he can make whatever he wishes or play whatever he would like. The first meeting is usually one of individual activity although the session is concluded around a common refreshment table. Each boy is given complete freedom and little or no guidance in his

34. Quoted by Slavson, *ibid.*, 100-101.

35. Slavson, *ibid.*, 27.

use of the materials or in his contacts with others. The goal is to develop self reliance in the child, but at the same time the therapist is careful to avoid any impression of rejection.

Slavson works with what he calls the "activity therapy group." In a small group the child is given an emotional reorientation by experiencing actual situations in which dynamic interaction with other members of the group tends to modify his own behavior. The problem child has developed non-social or anti-social behavior in an effort to compensate for an inadequate adjustment to the persons in his world. Such behavior has developed in an effort to meet felt needs, but since it is unacceptable it leads only into further difficulties. The urgent need of the child is for a situation in which the inadequate defenses are no longer needed and in which help in making better adjustment is available. The activity therapy group supplies such a need through its permissive environment. The therapist, who establishes the atmosphere of the group, accepts unconditionally any type of behavior. The child is accepted and loved in all of his faults and shortcomings. His destructiveness or aggressiveness is accepted (although not approved) but is not given any recognition. There is no limit to the permissive atmosphere except in the case of attack on the therapist. The child soon learns that the persecution and rejection

tion to which he had become accustomed are non-existent in the therapy group. He meets, perhaps for the first time, an adult who is positive and accepting.

The result of this permissive atmosphere is the release of pent-up antagonisms and hostilities through activity catharsis. Instead of release of feelings through verbal expression, the child acts out his feelings. The only control is that provided by the group itself. The permissive atmosphere, however, does more than give opportunity for release; it provides an environment conducive to growth. The old super-ego of the child is gradually replaced with one built on love and positive identification. Bit by bit, as the children gain in ability to withstand frustration, the therapist becomes less permissive and exercises increasing restraint. This comes, however, only after the children have gained a new orientation as a result of the early permissiveness.

Although the therapist establishes the atmosphere, the group itself plays a large part in the therapy. The strongest check upon behavior lies in the negative reaction of the group, and the strongest force leading to modification of behavior is the desire for acceptance by the group. Gradually over the period of weeks a warm family feeling develops. The need for non-social or anti-social acts disappears as the spirit of mutual helpfulness develops. Under

the quiet encouragement of the leader the fundamentals of social living are learned. Because the leader exhibits attitudes of friendly acceptance and appreciation, the children adopt such attitudes toward each other. These new attitudes are not discussed but instead they are represented by all that the therapist does. Hostile and destructive acts are not punished, they simply go unnoticed. The group itself provides the restraining influence by its disapproval. The leader fosters a spirit of friendliness by praising every creative effort, and the group members soon catch the spirit and praise each other's work freely.

As the child learns to accept himself and to meet the demands of reality in a group, he begins to take on a new attitude toward the world. Through growing identifications and associations with members in the group he finally becomes wholly integrated into the group. His desire to belong, the social hunger which is the prerequisite for effective group therapy, is satisfied in the group. Reality is further extended for him through trips and excursions which take him beyond the permissive atmosphere of the meeting room. Slowly he learns to adjust to the real world and to take his rightful place in it. His social re-education is the last step in the process that began with unconditional love and continued through opportunities for ego satisfactions

and for creative expression.³⁶

Although the methods in group therapy vary considerably, the underlying principles are basically the same. A more detailed study of one method will help to indicate just how the dynamics actually operate. For this purpose a more complete presentation of the Classes in Applied Psychology will be given.

36. Cf. Nathan Ackerman, "Group Therapy from the Viewpoint of a Psychiatrist," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 13 (October, 1943), 679.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CLASSES IN APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY

1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CLASSES

There are many reasons for giving a more thorough consideration to the work of Dr. Pratt and his associates in the treatment of psychoneuroses at the Boston Dispensary. This dissertation is primarily concerned with principles and methods of group therapy as they can be applied to church work, and in the Classes in Applied Psychology the possibility of such an application is clearly visible. Reference has already been made to Dr. Pratt's indebtedness to Wesley's Class Meetings for some of his methodology.¹ Moreover, there is a clear parallel between the Boston Dispensary Classes and the traditional Prayer Meeting Services. Part of the leadership, too, has been in the hands of psychiatrically oriented ministers and as a result some of the methods found helpful by religion in meeting the demands of life, translated into psychological terms, have been introduced. Marsh had seen the value of such teachings when he asserted that "if the texts on practical religious methods are read and translated into the phrase-

1. Cf. Page 126 above.

ology of psychiatry, they will be found helpful."²

Even without this association with religion, however, the Boston Dispensary work is well suited for careful study. In the first place, its long, successful history with the treatment of psychoneurotics gives it the distinction of being not only the first such class but also the only one in existence with so many years of uninterrupted service. The class was organized, as has been shown above, on scientific principles evolved through years of experimentation with tuberculous patients. Its procedures and its results have been described and analyzed in scientific and popular journals at several different times.³ The prominence of the work was indicated by Hadden when he said (in 1940): "At the present time the most successful exponents of group psychotherapy as a means of treating the neuroses are Pratt of Boston and his co-workers, Harris and Rhoades."⁴ The Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service, Dr. Thomas Parran, in an address at the

2. Marsh, "Group Treatment of the Psychoses by the Psychological Equivalent of the Revival," 342.

3. A special bibliography of the most significant writings arranged chronologically is given in the appendix.

4. Samuel B. Hadden, in an address written November, 1940, and published as "Treatment of the Neuroses by Class Technique," Annals of Internal Medicine, 16 (January, 1942), 33.

150th Anniversary Celebration of the Boston Dispensary, noted the significance and the influence of the pioneering work in group therapy under Dr. Pratt's leadership.⁵ Dr. Hauptmann asserts that 90 per cent of the psychoneurotics who seek help can be treated successfully by the methods employed at the Boston Dispensary.⁶ Since the methodology has been worked out with careful purposiveness and since it has been used with good success by several different class directors, it lends itself to worthwhile analysis. Through such an analysis the dynamics operating in these classes, and, indeed, in group therapy at large, are readily discerned. Moreover, the relationship between individual and group therapy is at least indicated. And, finally, the position of the writer as director of one of the classes throughout the past year helps to bring first hand knowledge of the methods used.

For an understanding of the reasons that led Dr. Pratt to organize the first Thought Control Class in 1930, it is necessary to consider the writings of Dejerine. About 1915 Dr. Pratt's attention fell upon Dejerine's book⁷ in which

5. Address given March 17, 1947, at Boston.

6. Cf. Alfred Hauptmann, "Group Therapy for Psychoneuroses," Diseases of the Nervous System, 4 (January, 1943), 23.

7. J. Dejerine and E. Gauckler, The Psychoneuroses and Their Treatment by Psychotherapy.

the thesis was set forth that physical symptoms may often be caused by disturbances in the psychic life of man. Asserting that the psychoneuroses were caused primarily by a change in the mental or moral state, Dejerine sought to effect cure by disregarding for the moment the bodily symptoms and by appealing to the emotions. He insisted that a cure of physical symptoms depended on a change of mental attitude and that reason and argument alone were not enough to accomplish such a change. Psychotherapy, for him, depended on the beneficial influence of one person upon another, of the personality of the doctor upon the patient. It was the emotional appeal of the doctor, he claimed, that stirred up and redirected emotions along healthy channels in the patient's life and so enabled him to acquire better mental habits. Without this emotional appeal there was a strong resistance to new ideas. Thus Dejerine's treatment was in a sense a cure by faith; faith in the doctor.

Dr. Pratt had discovered for himself how futile it was to effect a cure by treating the neuroses through reason alone. After reading Dejerine, he saw the need for treating the patient's personality as well. Functional nervous disorders, he realized, were caused by abnormal emotional reactions and could be cured only through treating the total

personality.⁸ As a result of this understanding, many cases heretofore diagnosed as examples of organic disease were found to be functional nervous cases. Thirty-five per cent of the patients in the Medical Clinic of the Boston Dispensary were found to have physical symptoms of emotional origin.⁹ However, even though diagnosis had been improved, attempts at treatment through persuasion and moral education were largely unsuccessful. It was then that Dr. Pratt determined to try the class method that had been so satisfactory with his tuberculous patients. It was his hope that the class would create the emotional appeal so necessary for cure, and his hope was realized far beyond his expectations.

The first class met on April 11, 1930, under Dr. Pratt's direction. Miss Edith R. Canterbury of the Social Service Department at the Boston Dispensary assisted in the organization and served as the first class secretary. Her record of the first session has as its heading: "Class for Health and Happiness."¹⁰ Three women patients were present,

8. Cf. Joseph H. Pratt, "The Group Method in the Treatment of Psychosomatic Disorders," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 87.

9. Cf. Pratt, "The Influence of Emotions in the Causation and Cure of Psychoneuroses," International Clinics, 4 (December, 1934), 11.

10. Secretary's Record Book, Thought Control Class, Dr. Joseph H. Pratt, Director, April 11, 1930.

all of whom had been referred for treatment from the Medical Clinic, and one of them started off the class by telling of her cure from a back ailment which had incapacitated her for months. Under Dr. Pratt's guidance she had learned to see the connections between her groundless anxieties and her symptoms and had made a complete recovery. She was the same patient who suggested some months later the name by which the class was to become famous. When explaining her cure to a friend, she admitted its almost miraculous nature but ascribed it to "Dr. Pratt's thought control class." This designation was accepted as the title for the class for, as Dr. Pratt said: "She had grasped the central teaching that cure was wrought by thought and emotional control."¹¹ At the second class session a quotation was suggested which has since become something akin to a class motto: "You can't change the world, so change yourself."¹²

Since the first session in 1930, the Thought Control Class has met regularly each Thursday morning with the exception of brief summer recesses, the first session in 1948 being the 843rd meeting. In order to make a class available for men and women who were working and hence unable to attend in the morning, an evening class was begun on January

11. Joseph H. Pratt, "The Group Method in the Treatment of Psychosomatic Disorders," 89.

12. Or, as preferred at present, "If you can't change the world, then change yourself."

13, 1936, by Rev. Winfred Rhoades, a religious psychologist who had been assisting Dr. Pratt for some time in personal interviewing that supplemented the group therapy. The evening class was held on Monday from 6:30 to 7:30, an early hour so that time was left for other activities after the class. Mr. Rhoades not only gave very capable and successful leadership to the class, but through his writings the work became widely known in lay circles.¹³ Another class, organized on Thursday afternoons by Dr. Herbert I. Harris, a student of Dr. Pratt's, met from January 6, 1938, until the 75th session on May 25, 1939, when it was discontinued.

A new chapter in the history of the Thought Control Classes began in 1942 when Professor Paul E. Johnson in the Psychology of Religion Department of Boston University School of Theology became interested in the work and arranged with Dr. Pratt to have advanced students assist in interviewing and counseling with class members. That arrangement proved satisfactory for all concerned so that at present about four theological students are regularly assigned for clinical training at the Boston Dispensary. When Mr. Rhoades resigned after the 454th session of the Monday even-

13. Cf. especially his article, "Group Training in Thought Control for Relieving Nervous Disorders," Mental Hygiene, 3 (July, 1935), 373-86 and its condensation in Readers Digest, 28 (February, 1936), 35-39.

ing class on October 28, 1946, Professor Johnson assumed the leadership. This responsibility as class director was passed on to the writer on February 17, 1947, and has continued in his hands to the present. Professor Johnson, meanwhile, became the director of the Thursday morning class on November 14, 1946, and has continued in that capacity to the present. The classes are currently called the Classes in Applied Psychology. A medical psychologist, Dr. Rose Hilferding, has been connected with both classes since October, 1941, and does the initial interviewing as well as providing medical supervision and counseling with difficult cases.

Other classes have been organized in various parts of the country following Dr. Pratt's pattern. Dr. Samuel B. Hadden started similar work in the out-patient department of the Presbyterian Hospital in 1939 and Dr. Norman Johnson did the same in Minneapolis. Dr. Harvey Beck has had an Educational Therapy Class since January, 1942 at the Amherst H. Wilder Dispensary in St. Paul, Minnesota, which is patterned after the Boston Dispensary work.

The purpose of the Classes in Applied Psychology is to treat psychic maladjustments, many of which find expression in physical (psychosomatic) symptoms. The problem is more than one of merely removing symptoms; it is an effort at helping to integrate disorganized and struggling lives

into ordered and successful personalities.¹⁴ The change is accomplished in part by re-education, but it is primarily a re-education of the emotions rather than of the intellect. In telling of the cure of one of his early patients Dr. Pratt says: "A strong vitalizing emotion had removed her pain but the underlying cause of it had been eradicated by an altered state of mind, in other words by moral re-education."¹⁵ The vitalizing emotion is the hope for cure and the faith in the class, and the altered state of mind is the result of accepting a new outlook on life as taught by the class. Mr. Rhoades puts it in these words:

The patient who learns to look upon his neurosis as "the negation of life"...and who, therefore, turns himself about and sets his face toward the affirmation of life, with the object of drawing into himself life more abundant and more true - - that patient has begun already to master his impediments.¹⁶

2. METHODS USED IN THE CLASSES

In the next paragraphs the specific methods used to attain these goals are set forth. The focus of attention

14. Cf. Winfred Rhoades, "Group Training in Thought Control for Relieving Nervous Disorders," 376.

15. Pratt, "The Group Method in the Treatment of Psychosomatic Disorders," 89.

16. Rhoades, "Group Training in Thought Control for Relieving Nervous Disorders," 386.

will be on the evening class since the writer is intimately acquainted with it; however, the procedure varies very little in the two classes, and, indeed, has varied only slightly in its seventeen years of use. Any figures quoted refer to a study made¹⁷ of the period from February, 1947, through October, 1947, unless otherwise indicated.

All of the patients who are admitted to the Classes in Applied Psychology have been referred either by private physicians or by one of the clinics at the Boston Dispensary. This procedure makes certain that there is no organic condition overlooked; that the symptoms of which the patient complains are psychogenic and the problem is one of functional nervous disorder. Over 4000 patients¹⁸ have been referred to the classes. A rough classification of complaints as obtained in a survey by a show of hands at an average class session¹⁹ with 29 patients in attendance gives an indication of the variety and multiple nature of the difficulties. Symptoms and problems centered around:

Exhaustion	22
Digestion	19
Heart	19
Anxiety	17
Tension	16
Respiration	12

17. This study is described in detail on pages 214-19.

18. Cf. Paul E. Johnson, "Religious Psychology and Health," Mental Hygiene, 31 (October, 1947), 562.

19. Monday evening class, December 1, 1947.

Instability	11
Elimination	10
Headache	10
Insomnia	8
Skin	6
Endocrine	5

Each patient referred to the class is given an interview by Dr. Hilferding, the medical psychologist, for the purpose of obtaining an emotional history. At this time the classes are interpreted to the patient and he is encouraged to attend. Of 298 patients referred and interviewed 148 or about 50 per cent attended at least one class session during the 8 month period studied.²⁰ The strong resistance to treatment by psychotherapy instead of by drugs is clearly indicated in these figures. For those who do go on to enter the class, however, a good rapport is usually established with Dr. Hilferding in this initial interview. The patient sees Dr. Hilferding at the first class session, is greeted by her, and thus is helped to feel at home. Moreover, through these interviews the class director learns of the symptoms troubling the new patients and so can make specific mention of those problems although without any personal reference. Thus the new patient is helped to feel from the start that the help sought elsewhere for so long is now available in this group. As will be indicated, the

20. Dr. Harris found that about 80 per cent accepted the invitation. Cf. Herbert I. Harris, "Efficient Psychotherapy for the Large Out-Patient Clinic," 2.

initial interview is supplemented by other personal contacts where they seem desirable. Dr. Hadden, working in a similar situation, found that the group work succeeded best when supplemented by some interviews,²¹ and indeed therapists are generally agreed that group therapy does not take the place of individual help.

As the newcomer enters the class for the first time he finds about 24 people²² standing and sitting around a small lecture room, apparently enjoying animated social intercourse. Both sexes are well represented and the ages range from 22 to 67. The reactions of the new patient are well expressed by a former class member.

The first day I attended I looked around the hall at the other patients. They all looked well for there were no tangible evidences of illness. At first there was doubt in my mind. Was this the right place for me?²³

The friendly atmosphere of the group, however, helps to dispel some of the misgivings. The newcomer is ushered by a floor secretary (a volunteer from the class) to the secretary at the table where the process of enrollment is com-

21. Cf. Samuel B. Hadden, "Post-Military Group Psychotherapy with Psychoneurotics," Mental Hygiene, 31 (January, 1947), 90.

22. This figure represents the average attendance of the Monday evening class. Visitors are usually present in addition to this number.

23. Anne C. Cox, "A Lay Person's Experience in a Psychotherapy Class," Advance, 138 (March, 1946), 15.

pleted and the patient is introduced to the class director. As each regular member comes his record card is removed from the file and credit is given him for attendance.

The class begins at 6:30 with some informal remarks by the director followed by the calling of the roll. As each name is called the patient responds by telling how many times he has been to the class. Thus each person is given personal recognition; his card in the record file helps him to feel that he belongs to the group. Whether he attends regularly or not, he is a member of the group and his presence recognized personally by the director. Rejection and exclusion, which the neurotic dreads, are entirely lacking. The recognition given helps to satisfy one of the basic yearnings of all people, the desire to be identified with a group. Moreover, as his attendance record increases, he becomes an even more important part of the group. He begins to feel that he is on the inside, that he is identified with a select group that has learned a secret that many need. This feeling of being on the inside, one that characterizes so much group activity including Christianity itself, helps to enlarge his own self confidence and to stimulate his ambition. The morning class (but not the evening one) makes an addition to the roll call technique by having members seated according to the number of times they have attended with the highest four sitting

on an honor bench on the platform. This device adds a bit of competition to the class and gives especial recognition to those who have attended the longest. Dr. Pratt stresses the value of getting acquainted with others in the process of finding the right seat, but the evening class has preferred to omit this feature as being time consuming and not too important. The one important thing is that each member does feel wanted in the class. By the time the names have been called in several sessions they have become familiar to all.

The roll call is followed by the reading by the director of progress reports. Here is another opportunity for each member to establish a personal contact with the leader. In a sentence or two he writes on a slip of paper the progress or lack of progress which he is making. Although the slips are signed, they are read anonymously and commented upon. Each person thus has an opportunity of expressing himself to the leader and the group; yet, at the same time, by keeping the reports anonymous the individual's self-consciousness is not intruded upon. This group is for some the only place where any recognition is given to them personally and for this reason if for no other the roll call and progress reports are significant. The neurotic person is typically an isolated one but he cannot be forced into social participation. The Class in Applied Psychology

helps him to advance at his own pace. Particular progress is commented on and encouraged.

The progress reports, as they are read, are placed into three separate groups; those that show progress and hence are good, those that indicate failure to make progress and hence are poor, and those that are stationary or in between the two extremes. Invariably the majority of these reports fall in the good group. The actual figures are 57 per cent good, 25 per cent stationary, and 18 per cent poor, - in the period studied. The psychological effect on the newcomers of the preponderantly good reports is very significant. Not only is their hope for cure kindled, but they are encouraged to believe in the leader and to have faith in the class methods. The cumulative evidence of the reports is a far more satisfactory method of showing results than any amount of talking on the part of the director. Indirect suggestion operates here in a positive manner. Moreover, these brief communications from the members give the leader an opportunity to make pertinent comments directed not only to the author but to newcomers as well. New members are interested as well as impressed by the contents of the reports. The reports, also, indicate to the director the success of the class and help to screen out those who are not improving and who may need more individual help. All those whose reports fall in the poor group are

urged to remain after class for an interview.

Following the reports, a brief period is given over to exercises in relaxation carried out by the class in unison. In a mild type of group hypnosis the leader directs the letting go of tension first from one set of muscles and then from another until the entire body is completely relaxed. A mental relaxation exercise follows in which the members are asked to draw a picture in their minds of a quiet, peaceful scene which the leader suggests. A show of hands is called for to indicate success in physical and mental relaxation and the results are announced. All but three or four are generally completely relaxed. These simple exercises serve several significant functions. They help to unify the group by an activity that is shared in common to the last detail. They are a definite aid in getting the undivided attention of everyone in the room. They give each newcomer something tangible that he can take away with him and use to good advantage during the week. They help to create a receptive mood for the talk that follows. And, in addition, they are definitely therapeutic, for muscular tension is the commonest symptom among persons with emotional maladjustments.²⁴ The relaxation of muscles influences the autonomic nervous system so that emotional ten-

24. Cf. David H. Fink, Release from Nervous Tensions (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1943), 91.

sion tends to be reduced. Numerous patients testify to the value of these exercises.

The relaxing exercises are followed by a talk by the director lasting about twenty minutes. The emphasis in the talks, following Dr. Pratt's example,²⁵ is inspirational with an emotional appeal. The goal is a new emotional adjustment to life, and such a goal calls for a better understanding of one's self plus an emotional drive to translate new insight into action. The talks are given rather informally in simple non-technical language with comments, questions, and discussion encouraged from the class. Often the blackboard will be used for diagraming some of the simpler psychological mechanisms that help to explain emotional maladjustment. An effort is made by the directors to give something tangible to the group each week, perhaps a motto or a brief poem or a series of simple steps for meeting a specific problem such as fear or anxiety. Reference is often made to case material in which the symptoms were similar to those found among class members. A vicarious catharsis is accomplished as the patients identify themselves with the experiences recounted.²⁶ Case studies

25. Cf. Joseph H. Pratt, "The Group Method in the Treatment of Psychosomatic Disorders," 91.

26. Cf. Hadden, "The Utilization of a Therapy Group in Teaching Psychotherapy," The American Journal of Psychiatry, 103 (March, 1947), 645.

often make possible indirect suggestions for treatment that would be resisted if given in an individual face to face interview. Indeed, the entire class lecture procedure expedites the acceptance of unwelcome truths, for the objective and impersonal nature of the presentation to the group eliminates much of the resistance that an individual alone would erect in a more personal situation. The explanation of the psychic origin of physical symptoms can be given much more effectively in a group.

It is not enough, however, for the talk to be merely instructive. It must be practical and interesting and must have some emotional appeal. Dr. Hauptmann studied the class work very thoroughly²⁷ and then wrote: "It may sound paradoxical, but it is the fact that it is not so important what the leader says as how he says it."²⁸ This assertion does not detract from the importance of careful and thoughtful preparation of the talk, but it does stress the emotional rather than the intellectual appeal. Winfred Rhoades' book, The Self You Have to Live With,²⁹ which includes a good deal of material used in class lectures, has

27. Cf. Pratt, "The Group Method in the Treatment of Psychosomatic Disorders," 91.

28. Cf. Alfred Hauptmann, "Group Therapy for the Psychoneuroses," Diseases of the Nervous System, 4 (January, 1943), 3.

29. New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1938. See also his other books as listed in the bibliographies.

been so popular that it has been reprinted twelve times. An outline of a recent lecture ³⁰is presented to indicate more specifically the current nature of the talks.

Managing Your Mind

1. There are three stages in the work of the class:
 - 1st. You come with a very real pain or problem.
 - 2nd. You gain understanding about the source of your trouble and encouragement from the class.
 - 3rd. You gain increasing victory over your trouble because of your new understanding.
2. These three stages are illustrated in an army puppet show in which G. I. Joe allows Common Sense to be conquered by Rufus Resentment, Freddie Fear, Archibald Anger, and Sam Sorrow until G. I. Joe gets new understanding.
3. There are four major enemies of common sense:
 - 1st. Looking backward with regret.
 - 2nd. Looking forward with fear.
 - 3rd. Overrating your importance.
 - 4th. Underrating your ability.
4. Understanding restores common sense, and common sense brings physical comfort and happiness. Get understanding; get courage; get busy.

The last few minutes of the class hour³¹ are given over to discussion and to testimonies. Through both discussion and testimonies the newer members are helped to understand how many others in the group have symptoms similar to their own. Their problems, viewed against the background of common difficulties, appear less unique, less formidable, and hence less disturbing. Moreover, the newcomers soon take new courage as they hear of the successful re-

30. Given Monday evening, October 20, 1947.

31. The larger morning class lasts about an hour and a half.

adjustment made by many of the older members. The impact of the indirect suggestion from the progress reports is enhanced by direct testimony from those who are improving and who give credit for improvement to the class. The power of suggestibility in the group tends to influence each member of the group, including newcomers, to submit to the beliefs of the majority.³² The newcomers enter the group with a rather natural resistance to treatment by class psychotherapy, but once within the group their individuality tends to diminish and the contagion of the group belief in the leader and in the class tends to overcome their opposition.

Moreover, the consideration of the problems of others helps to diminish the egocentricity that is so clearly a part of the neurotic make-up. The nervous patient is generally self-centered with an exaggerated sense of the importance of his own symptoms. In the discussion period, whether he wants to or not, he is obliged to think of the troubles of others. The extrovertive function of the group is already at work. This change of attitude away from introversion is furthered by the common goal toward which the class is moving. The goal of getting well through making a better emotional adjustment to life is both positive and desirable. It is a goal toward which all the class members are

32. Cf. McDougall, The Group Mind, 57-59.

striving, a striving that is further stimulated by mild competition. The ones in the class who gain recognition are not those with the most unique symptoms but are those who are making the best progress. For the neurotic person the physical symptoms usually represent secondary gains, that is the symptoms indicate an effort at adjustment but an effort that is largely inadequate. In the Class in Applied Psychology the rewards in terms of recognition are given to those who have seen through the secondary adjustment and are adjusting on a more satisfactory level. The class enters enthusiastically and co-operatively into the task of emulating successful members in their progress. This working toward a common, constructive goal is one of the basic advantages of the therapy group over individual efforts.

The values of discussions and testimonies are not limited to the listeners but extend also to those who speak. Here is one place where every word that one speaks is given a thoughtful hearing. The speaker is making a contribution to the group which the group invites and appreciates. For a moment the spot-light of attention is on him. Opportunity is given for a degree of catharsis as the speaker expresses his negative emotions of fear and anxiety and self pity. To be sure, the emphasis in the class is away from the recital of symptoms as the inspirational-repressive

designation suggests, but opportunity is given now and then for purging of emotion in the presence of creative listeners.³³ Sometimes the symptoms are listed on the progress reports and then discussed in class. Again, as with the use of case histories, the other class members gain a vicarious catharsis in listening. More significant, however, are the testimonies of successful members. While encouraging new members and others who are not making good progress, the testimonies also confirm and strengthen the speaker in his new attitude toward life. His public utterance sets a standard which he feels obliged to maintain in order not to disappoint the leader and the class. Dr. Hauptmann speaks of the individual as being anchored by his public testimony and goes on to say that the first public utterance has the effect of an emotional shock, but an effect that hastens the curative process just as insulin shock or electric shock aids in treating the psychoses.³⁴ Two recent testimonies as given in class are presented in approximately the form in which they were given.

Mr. T. T. is a big, husky, healthy appearing man in his early thirties. His testimony after attending about fourteen class sessions made a great impression on the class.

33. Cf. Rhoades, "Group Training in Thought Control for Relieving Nervous Disorders," 385.

34. Cf. Hauptmann, "Group Therapy for Psychoneuroses," 3.

The first time I came here I asked myself, "How is that man going to help me?" But I decided that since I had been everywhere else I would give it a chance, so I came back. I'm glad I did.

I never knew there was any connection between the mind and attitudes and the physical body. When I came here I had been going to doctors for years - eighteen different ones. I had a back condition that bothered me, a sort of arthritis. I was afraid I would be crippled for life like a relative I have is. They tried everything. I've been in a plaster cast for months. For over a year I wore a steel brace. But nothing helped. I was terribly discouraged. Then I came here.

If I had just known then what I know now as a result of this class I would have been saved all that depression. I'm not all well yet, but the tensions in the back have gone completely and my general condition has much improved. I am very grateful for the help that I have received from the class. I have the confidence that through the help of the class I shall some day feel perfect.

Mrs. E. S. is a busy mother, 36 years old, who lives in a noisy housing project. She listed her symptoms as: "exhaustion, pain, rapid heart, difficulty in breathing, extreme difficulty thinking, etc., etc., etc." Two of her progress reports indicate her attitude toward the class.

June 9, 1947. Very difficult week but I only feel tired from it, no lasting tension. This clinic is like church to me.

May 26, 1947. (Her 19th session) In spite of the fact we had 3 windows broken by rocks in the baby's room and a drunken man molesting my daughter I felt good all week. A few months ago this would have tied me in knots.

Her class testimony was so similar to her comments written on the questionnaire that the comments are quoted directly rather than giving the approximate testimony.

I really think I was dying last year. I was losing weight and so tired I could not work. Any noise hurt

so that I was in actual agony. I could not breathe and had such poor circulation that my arms and legs went to "sleep."

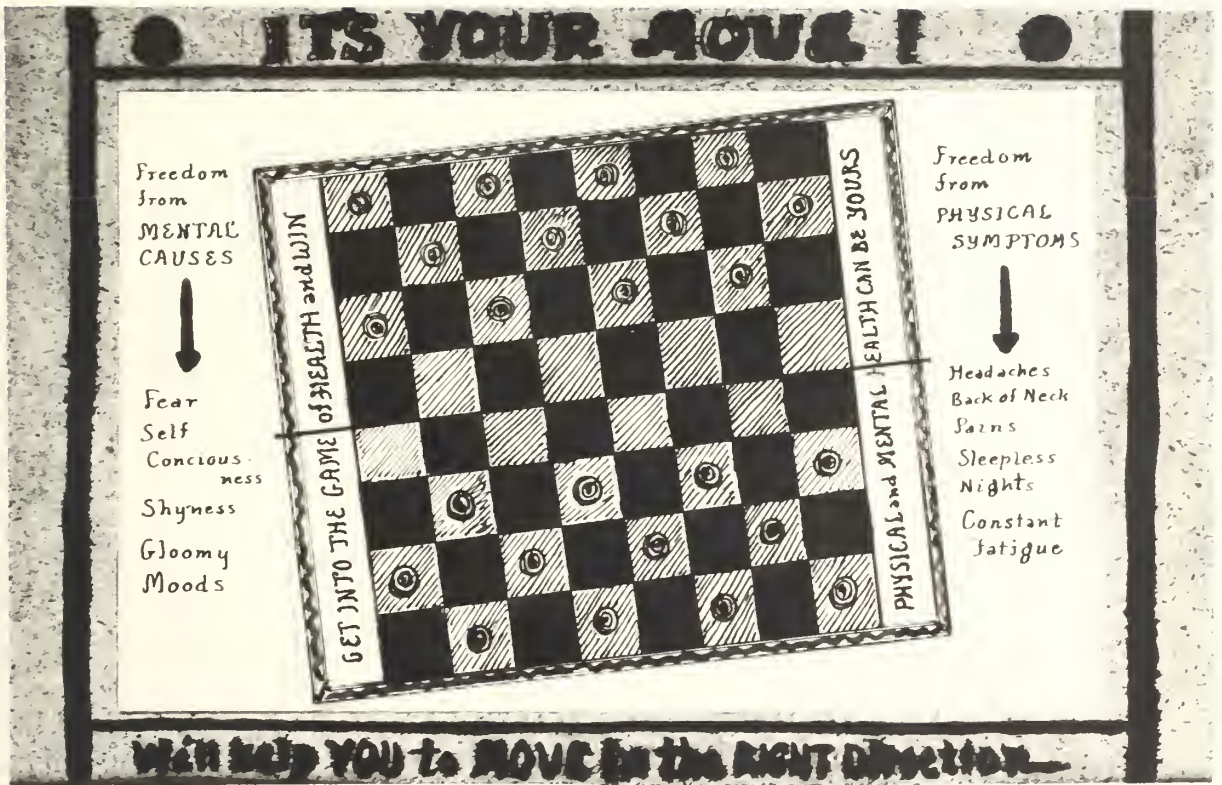
After the very first week of clinic my breathing improved suddenly as tho (sic) an iron band had been removed.

Nearly all the environmental conditions which caused my conditions are the same. Yet I know I will never be so sick again and for this knowledge and its consequences of good health I can never thank this clinic enough.

This same woman illustrated the change that the class has brought to her life by two drawings portraying herself before and after attendance at the class. These drawings are given in Figure 2 along with a poster made by one of the men in the morning class, Mr. P. C. Such work is encouraged since it provides an outlet for artistic interests, gives some recognition to the artist, and provides a medium through which further testimonies are given of the value of the classes. The poster stresses the initiative that each member needs to take in the words printed at the top: "It's your move!" and then points to the help that the class can give in the words at the bottom: "We'll help you to move in the right direction."

A young (31) working girl, Miss D. M., wrote a comment on her questionnaire which illustrates another reaction to the class.

Aside from the mental and physical benefits I received (in overcoming nervous tension, inability to sleep, and depression), I gained a great deal of insight into meeting different problems that arise, and have found the solution of them in many phases of the lectures I heard last year.



Before
(attending class)



After

THE CLASSES IN APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY AS ILLUSTRATED BY MEMBERS IN A POSTER (Top) AND IN TWO DRAWINGS (Bottom)

FIGURE 2

For example, though I have been feeling fine right along, this past fall I have noticed that I have been disinterested in my work and in a state of disgust at times. I happened to remember Professor Johnson's lecture on growth being necessary for happiness. I realized that I was just standing still in my work, and was beginning to lose my self-respect. So, I acted on the strength of that, and succeeded in obtaining another position which offers more challenge to learn and the undertaking of new procedures plus a considerable salary boost.

I feel that what I have acquired in your classes plus my faith in them has made it possible for me to make the most out of my life. I feel very indebted to you.

At the conclusion of the class session many of the members linger to talk with each other or with the class leader. It is obvious that many greatly enjoy the class sessions. One young woman, whose symptoms have not greatly improved, nevertheless finds real stimulus in the class. She writes: "[I] am just always looking forward to every minute of it." A young man who has made remarkable progress writes: "My only wish is that the class lasted for two hours instead of one." The general attitude of the older members is summed up well by a thirty-two year old woman who notes that she has been greatly helped and writes: "I think it is a wonderful idea that we can get together to help each other. Thanks to every one." This idea of mutual aid, of working together in a common cause, plays a large role in developing appreciation for the group and in increasing courage. Gregarious impulses, too, are satisfied to some degree in the class. The members feel a common bond in suffering and

quickly feel that they really belong in the group. Moreover, as a part of the group, the newcomers rapidly catch the confidence that fellow-sufferers have in the leader. A part of the success of the group depends on a warm relationship existing between members and leader. There must be some degree of transference between the leader and the member in order to achieve therapeutic results, and the group stimulates this relationship. On the other hand, the transference is spread out to other members and the group as a whole so that the disadvantage of an unwholesome dependence on the leader is avoided. A spirit of rivalry develops as the members compete with each other in gaining the approval of the leader and the plaudits of the group for maximum improvement.

For those who desire more personal help there are advanced students from Boston University School of Theology who make themselves available for interviews. Generally the members take advantage of a general invitation and approach these assistants of their own accord; however, if no one takes the initiative the director singles out individuals who are not making satisfactory progress and introduces them to the assistants. Professor Johnson describes the interviewing in these words:

They...interview patients to provide catharsis or release of crippling repressions and emotional tension, to help them to understand the place of guilt, hostility, fear, and isolation in their illnesses, to find

ways of sharing their sorrows and desires, to take positive steps to resolve conflicts, to re-educate emotional attitudes, and to work out a wholesome pattern of healthful living and responsible service to others.³⁵

Dr. Hilferding and the class leaders deal with members who need particular help. Older members often approach the newcomers in order to help them to feel at home and to understand the class better. Since many of the members have only limited social opportunities, the value of these informal contacts should not be minimized.

3. A STUDY OF RESULTS OVER AN 8 MONTH PERIOD

The difficulty of obtaining accurate statistics in psychotherapy is well known, but an effort has been made to obtain at least approximate figures to give objective evidence of results. A study was made of the period from February 1, 1947 to October 31, 1947, omitting the summer recess month of August. The specific purpose of the study was to determine to what degree the patients were being helped and to find out what factors were most responsible. After determining the total numbers of patients who attended both classes after referral, attention was centered on those patients who started attending the evening class during the period studied and who continued for five or more sessions. Dr. Pratt set five sessions as the number required to gain

35. Paul E. Johnson, "Clinical Education of the Pastor," Christian Education, 30 (March, 1947), 106.

a full understanding of the method and teachings of the class.³⁶ These figures were obtained from the records in the Boston Dispensary and from the class record books. A questionnaire³⁷ was used to determine improvement and to ascertain the responsible factors. Progress reports and the subjective opinions of Dr. Hilferding and the writer (as class director) were used to supplement and verify the questionnaire results.

During the period studied 60 members were present in the evening class for at least 5 times. Of these 60, 46 returned the questionnaires with results as shown in Table I.

TABLE I

RESULTS OBTAINED FROM 46 QUESTIONNAIRES (OF 60 CIRCULATED)
FROM CLASS MEMBERS PRESENT AT LEAST 5 TIMES

Degree of Improvement	Number	Per cent	Summary of Results	Number	Per cent
Completely cured	3	7	Benefited	40	87
Greatly helped	19	41			
Some improvement	18	39			
No change	5	11	Not benefited	6	13
Feel worse	1	2			
Totals	46	100		46	100

The figure showing that 87 per cent of the regular members

36. Cf. Pratt, "The Influence of Emotions in the Causation and Cure of Psychoneuroses," 12.

37. A copy of the questionnaire is in the Appendix.

benefited from the class is not wholly accurate since it does not take into account the 14 members who did not return the questionnaire. Moreover, the 60 included some who had been attending the class for a long time and who were obviously enjoying it and benefiting from it. A more accurate picture of the effectiveness of the class is obtained by isolating the newcomers and studying their reports.

During the period studied, 298 patients were referred to Dr. Hilferding for interviews and of this number 151 or 50 per cent attended at least one class session (morning or evening). Of those who attended the classes, 44 or 30 per cent went only once; 70 or 47 per cent attended at least 5 times. Thus of the total number of newcomers originally referred, 23 per cent remained in the classes 5 times or more. Of these, 36 were in the evening class and it is this group that is of particular interest.

Of this group of 36, 28 persons or 78 per cent answered the questionnaire. The condition of the remaining 8 who did not return the questionnaire was determined from their progress reports, counting a majority of "good" reports as indicating some improvement. Table II shows the results for the entire group of 36. The same table also shows the results for the group of 24 old members as ascertained from 22 questionnaires and 2 progress reports.

TABLE II

REPORTS OF BENEFIT DERIVED BY CLASS
MEMBERS PRESENT AT LEAST 5 TIMES

	36 New Members		24 Old Members		All 60 Members	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Benefited	24	67	22	91	45	75
Not benefited	<u>12</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>25</u>
Totals	36	100	24	100	60	100

Recognizing the limitations of statistics, it can nevertheless be asserted that on the basis of this study at least 67 per cent of the patients attending the class for a minimum of five times have been helped. This figure is taken from the study of the new patients only and represents the actual situation with the greatest possible accuracy. These figures are even more significant when compared with the results of other similar studies. Harris,³⁸ in a study of these same classes in 1938, found that 52 per cent of the new patients indicated distinct improvement following class attendance and that 68 per cent of all patients (old as well as new) reported having been helped. In a study of a rather similar class at the Philadelphia

38. Herbert I. Harris, "Efficient Psychotherapy for the Large Out-Patient Clinic," 4.

General Hospital, Hadden³⁹ reached the conclusion that an improvement on the part of 68 per cent of the patients represented the approximate result. Such figures bear out the conclusions of the present study that something more than 67 per cent of the regular members are helped.

In addition to determining the specific percentage of those being helped, an effort was made through the questionnaire and through interviewing to learn what factors the class members thought were responsible for their improvement. Results are given in Table III as listed by two groups: the 46 out of the 60 evening class members who returned their questionnaires, and 37 other members in the morning and evening classes selected at random.

TABLE III

FACTORS REPORTED BY 83 MEMBERS AS BEING PRIMARILY
RESPONSIBLE FOR BENEFIT DERIVED FROM THE CLASSES

Responsible Factors	Group Studied	Others	Total
Lectures and the new outlook gained	28	18	46
Relaxing exercises	22	15	37
Class association and techniques	11	6	17
Specific help from staff	4	8	12
Discussion	3	2	5
Personal interviewing	2	2	4
Others	3	0	3

Many of the members found it difficult to say exactly what

39. Samuel B. Hadden, "Group Psychotherapy: A Superior Method of Treating Larger Numbers of Neurotic Patients," 70.

had helped and perhaps the high figure for the relaxing exercises can be understood better in this light. The exercises are tangible, easier to understand and to grasp than are the less specific factors of class influences. It is to be noted that the exercises themselves are greatly enhanced in the class situation. The same can be said, too, of the lectures. The indoctrination of new ideas proceeds at a much faster pace in a sympathetic class situation. A new outlook on life is much more readily accepted in the presence of others who testify to its validity. The actual figures giving credit to the class, then, do not represent the true influence of the class situation.

When these points are supplemented by personal interviews the part played by the class becomes more evident. "This class is like a haven of rest for me," one person said. Another told of the help he received in realizing so many others had similar trouble. One spoke of the rekindling of hope as a result of a personal testimony spoken in class. Still another mentioned the help gained from friendly conversation after class. The conclusions that can be drawn with considerable accuracy are that it is the class situation, the class atmosphere, the class association, and the class techniques that are instrumental in leading to such a high percentage of progress.

4. CLASSES COMPARED WITH THE PRAYER MEETING

Although the application of the insights gained from this study is reserved for the next chapter, at least a word should be said concerning the parallel between this class and the familiar mid-week prayer meeting⁴⁰ which played such a large role in the life of the church at the turn of the century. Both are weekly meetings in an informal class situation. The leadership remains the same, and a warm relationship between members and leader is encouraged. The roll call corresponds to personal greeting and recognition of each individual. The progress reports and the individual testimonies are similar to the testimonies of conversion and of religious growth. The period of relaxation creates a mood something like that of prayer. The leader's talk has a persuasive quality which, like a sermon, is aimed at an emotional response leading to action. The use of inspirational quotations corresponds to the use of scripture. The feeling of oneness in the pursuit of a common goal gives unity and stability to the group and encourages friendly relationships. Such points of correspondence make it clear that the methods used in this therapy group are not so very different from those used in religious

40. Cf. Johnson, "Religious Psychology and Health," Mental Hygiene, 31 (October, 1947), 563.

circles. Indeed, Norman Vincent Peale, the minister of the Marble Collegiate Church in New York City has used the technique of relaxation and of corporate silence with great effectiveness in his regular, weekly service of worship.⁴¹ He recognizes his indebtedness to group therapy for some of his practices and thus illustrates the point of this dissertation, that the church can make deliberate use of some of the principles and methods of group therapy for furthering its own purposes. The application to the church of some specific group therapy insights is the subject for the next chapter.

41. Cf. Norman Vincent Peale, A Guide to Confident Living (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), especially 1-16.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE APPLICATION OF GROUP THERAPY INSIGHTS TO THE CHURCH

1. THERAPEUTIC GROUPS AND THE CHURCH

Throughout this dissertation the assertion has been made that the church can benefit from many of the insights learned in therapeutic groups. After formulating the principles of group therapy and after setting forth their gradual development and illustrating how they are being used, it is now the purpose in this chapter to make a direct application of some of these principles to church work. Once again, however, it needs to be stressed that the church is not primarily concerned with organizing groups designed for therapy. Such work belongs rightfully in the medical and psychiatric clinic. The study of the Classes in Applied Psychology made it clear how dependent such classes are on medical auspices.

Clergymen are conducting these classes, to be sure, but their work begins only after the doctors have made their referrals and have indicated their continuing interest in the patients. Therapy groups of this sort are of interest in this dissertation, not as examples of new organizational machinery that the church might establish, but rather as successful attempts at therapy which bring to light basic principles that can be utilized

in any group. The more effective use of church groups as they already exist is the aim in this thesis.

Therapeutically oriented groups should exist for all unadjusted persons, but in the light of the prevalence of maladjustment, such an ideal is impossible. Such groups are not generally available, but church groups are, and without being designed for therapy, the groups in the church are part of an entire program which, in a sense, offers therapy. What is religion if it is not a way of life that leads to the satisfactions of the deepest needs and desires of man? Religious beliefs and attitudes involve a very definite code of behavior, and when such beliefs are of a healthy sort, then a therapeutic process is at work. Indeed, religion can and does go beyond the therapy of medical psychology in dealing not only with needs but also with values. J. Murray defends this point of view in these words:

Modern medical psychology can indeed unveil the shadow side of life, and explicate the complex, but only a religious psychology can give meaning and unity to life and explain man's deepest desires to himself.¹

1. J. A. C. Murray, An Introduction to a Christian Psychotherapy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), 8.

The classic religious expression of man's deepest need is found in Augustine's Confessions: "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds repose in Thee."² Thus, even though the emphasis in therapy in the church is different from that in medical clinics, the ultimate goal is the same and the church through its groups is working toward the goal.

There is, however, another fundamental difference in the approach of the church to the question of therapy. Psychotherapeutic groups are concerned with the abnormal, the obviously maladjusted, the sick. Church groups, on the other hand, are working with the normal, the fairly well adjusted, the healthy. To be sure, there is no clear line between the normal and the abnormal, but in a practical sense the normal person is one who conforms fairly well to customary behavior, who gets along fairly efficiently in daily life, and who is continuing to grow into greater maturity. He is one who accepts himself with a good degree of insight and who is working toward reasonable goals.³

2. The Confessions of St. Augustine, E. B. Percy, translator (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1907), 1.

3. Cf. Johnson, Psychology of Religion, 222-24 for a discussion of the normal personality.

Judged by such standards, the majority of the people in church groups are more or less normal. Nevertheless, normality does not mean that there is no need for therapy, no need for help in making a better adjustment to life. A highly significant experiment conducted over a period of years in London in a health center organized on the pattern of a Family Club⁴ has led to a better understanding of the needs of so-called normal, healthy persons. Through complete physical health examinations (overhauls), in a total of 3911 individuals of all ages, 90 per cent were found to be in disorder, ie., to have something physical wrong.⁵ These were not patients who had sought a doctor, but average people from a fairly good residential environment who were going about their daily life in a normal fashion. Within this group a further distinction was made. When samples of 500 families were taken, 25 per cent of the individuals were found to have disorders accompanied by disease as subjectively recognized by the

4. The Pioneer Health Centre, Queen's Road, Peckham, London, S. E.

5. Cf. I. H. Pearse and L. H. Crocker, The Peckham Experiment: A Study in the Living Structure of Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945), 94.

patient but the other 65 per cent who had disorders as discovered by the doctor believed themselves to be in a state of well being.⁶ These percentages which deal only with physical health become more significant as the relation between them and personality maladjustments is seen. Pearse and Crocker put it in these words: "With the figures for physical disease and disorder before us, it is no surprise that we should find corresponding disorder and absence of function in the psychological and social realm."⁷ In pointing to the therapeutic need for a family center such as the Pioneer Health Center provides, these significant words are written:

It is not wages that are lacking; nor leaders; nor capacity; certainly not goodwill; but quite simple - - and one would suppose ordinary - - personal, family and social opportunities for knowledge and for action that should be the birthright of all; ... current(*) opportunity for making up knowledge as the family goes along, and the seemingly trivial - - "Oh, I couldn't do that," "I couldn't go there," that spell out so long and truly pathetic a story, and such deep-seated psychopathological frustration, need no longer be heard in the realm.⁸

This study has been considered in some detail because of its significant implications for the church. When

6. Ibid., 97.

7. Ibid., 273.

8. Ibid., 274. The quotation up to the asterick (*) is in italics in the text.

these percentages of disorder in well-being are supplemented by the figures already given indicating the prevalence of psychoneuroses, it becomes quite clear that the normal people in church groups are far from being well adjusted individuals. They, too, are in need of therapy and the church is well situated for meeting their need. The Peckham study points out the desirability of having activities in which young and old can join for mutual benefit. The church through its many all-church activities of suppers, entertainments, parties, plays, etc., not to mention its services of worship and its programs of education, provides a natural gathering place for all ages. In its small groups it provides the opportunities for expression and development that are so greatly needed. In the section that follows a typical church program is described in order to show what types of group activity are commonly available. After describing what the groups in the church are, the final major consideration in this dissertation will be the application to church groups of insights gained from therapy groups.

2. A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF GROUP ACTIVITY IN ST. MARK'S METHODIST CHURCH

The application of the insights gained from group therapy to the work of the church is made clearer by reference to a specific church program. The insistence throughout this dissertation has been on the value of group therapy insights for making more effective use of existing church groups. To describe such groups in a church with which the writer is intimately acquainted is to present a factual background to which practical application can be made. In presenting a church program the emphasis is descriptive rather than normative. It is not the intention to present a program that utilizes all of the available opportunities for therapy through group activities; the purpose is rather to describe quite fully a contemporary program which illustrates the wide variety of organizations which are operating today within a fairly typical church of a relatively large membership. In the section that follows an outline will be given of the various types of groups and of the activities they carry on. The focus of attention will be on the small units where creative interaction is a real possibility. Comment will be made on the needs and interests that the group activities are trying to meet. Following the descriptive analysis will be a chart on which the group activity will be summarized.

The church chosen for this descriptive analysis is St. Mark's Methodist Church in Brookline, Massachusetts. It is a prosperous and flourishing church in a residential suburb of Boston, drawing its active membership of 1006 largely from the middle and upper middle economic classes. There is a considerable group of professional people in its membership and it has developed rather close ties with a large number of Boston University students. The present minister, William R. Leslie, is now in his twenty-seventh year at St. Mark's. He has had part time assistance over the years from students at Boston University School of Theology whose main responsibility has been for the Sunday night youth program. There is a full-time paid church secretary, but with the exception of the janitor, the organist, and the soloists, all the other workers are volunteers. There are 321 persons enrolled in the total program of religious education with 28 officers and teachers.

The program at St. Mark's follows the usual pattern of religious activities. To a considerable degree the organizations have developed as a need has been felt by a particular group as is illustrated in the case of the Men's Club which was started only in recent years. From time to time over the years new youth groups have been formed to provide activities for growing young people. The Couples' Club, for example, was organized during this year to meet

the interest and need of those no longer interested in the college age group. Similarly new units have been added to the women's activities whenever it has seemed desirable. This flexibility in organization helps to keep the church close to the needs of its people and provides for continual growth throughout the membership. Groups organized to meet special needs, however, exist within a well structured plan, and it is in terms of this plan that the activities will be described. The plan follows the main divisions of the religious education program supplemented by adult affairs.

Children's Division

Group activity with the children at St. Mark's is divided into three parts beginning with the Nursery Department which includes 48 children under 4 years of age. There is no actual physical group, but the church maintains contact with the parents through visitations in the home and through periodic distribution of literature. The church recognizes that the first group experiences are in the home with the parents and siblings, the church standing by with help and encouragement. There is, however, a play group for very young children which meets during church time so that parents may leave their children and be free to attend morning worship. The Nursery Department would dovetail with a young married couples' group in an ideal situation and plans are being laid in that direction. Once during this

year young parents with little children were invited to spend an evening at the church to work (painting furniture) and study and a good group responded.

It is not to be expected that the needs of the very young children will be met in group activity. Their need for affection, for regularity, and for worthy example⁹ is met best through understanding parents. For this early age group and indeed to some extent for all children, it is through group activity for the parents that the church can make its therapeutic contribution.

The Beginners' Department for pre-school children at St. Mark's consists of 18 children 4 and 5 years old. They meet in a single class for story-telling, singing, praying, and playing together. This is the age in which social adjustment becomes very important for before this time there is little actual social life. It is for this age group that the psychiatrist would recommend the best trained teachers. For some children, the Sunday School class is one of the earliest experiences in a social setting. It is a time for the discovery of other persons and, along with the discovery, for learning to cooperate with them. Opportunities for taking leadership in the simple activities of their play are needed and no one is in a better opportunity to help in this direction than the observant teacher. This is the time for

9. Cf. Johnson, Psychology of Religion, 67-69.

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learning the joy of sharing, the art which helps to guard against future selfishness. It is at this early age that the child begins to experience religion in sharing values with others.

The Primary Department at St. Mark's consists of 24 children who are organized into three classes of boys and girls according to their place in the first three grades of public school. The department meets together on Sunday morning for a brief worship service and then divides into classes for the remainder of the hour. Bible study with its relation to everyday life and expressional work make up the major emphasis in the classes. Like most of the Church School, the teachers follow the lesson plan prescribed by the larger Methodist Church.

The need for help in social adjustment is particularly important at this age since entrance into school makes social contacts unavoidable. Encouragement in developing abilities is especially needed, for the child of this age lacks some of his earlier confidence as he mingles with others. Wittenberg gives an excellent study of an 8 year old girl, "Shy Barbara," whose natural abilities were being submerged by more aggressive girls until her Sunday School teacher noted her reticence, recognized her latent ability, and helped provide opportunities in which the girl could grow through making contributions of her own.

This is the sort of thing that the teacher in a small class of 8 pupils can do quite readily.¹⁰ Activity for this age can begin to be purposeful. These children respond to encouragement better than they do to strict authority. They can be led to a desire to cooperate not only with other children but also with the teachers. Learning to work cooperatively and to follow the lead of others is of equal importance with aiding in developing unique abilities.

The Junior Department at St. Mark's has 26 members who join with the older departments on Sunday morning for a joint worship service and then divide into separate mixed groups of about 8 members according to their place in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in school. Study, some handwork, and occasional projects (often of a missionary nature) engage the attention of the classes. Occasional parties are held by the individual teachers for their own classes. A junior choir interests several of the girls but it has a rather spasmodic existence, being used more for special occasions than as a regular activity. The church sponsors a Brownie group for girls too young for scouts (under 10) which meets weekly in the church. There is no Cub Pack this year although there has often been one in the past.

10. Rudolf M. Wittenberg, So You Want To Help People (New York: Association Press, 1947), 152-56 .

This is an age in which successful achievement is a real need. Activity becomes more purposeful and some degree of success is needed in attaining the goals chosen. Competition is a dominant interest, but where competition is too keen, failure and the danger of inferiority feelings are always possibilities. The development of self-confidence is therefore highly important. It is a time, too, of real curiosity with a desire for wide explorations which can easily be directed into useful channels. The child grows faster through opportunities provided for personal exploration than through efforts at indoctrination. More and more the child needs to be helped to make his own social adjustments. Popularity is a personal achievement that cannot be bestowed by an adult. Satisfactions are found increasingly as personal selfcontrol is developed from within. Invitations to cooperation are generally more successful than coercive measures.

Youth Division

The program for adolescents at St. Mark's is organized under the general heading of the Youth Division with three main departments. The first of these is the Intermediate Department consisting of 20 boys and girls of the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. They are organized into two classes of about 10 each separated by sex.

During their Sunday morning study period they work on lesson material and special projects. The girls, for example, are studying the organization of the Bible by having as their project the making of a booklet consisting of favorite passages as selected and commented on by various members of the church and the community. In addition to the Sunday morning class, most of the boys and girls are active in scout troops sponsored by the church and meeting in the church. The Boy Scout Troop is led by the teacher of the boys' class. This troop of 30 members, with its organization into patrols of about 8 boys, affords another excellent opportunity for small group experience. The weekly evening meeting lasting for about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours of instruction, patrol meeting, and games is supplemented by additional patrol meetings and by occasional outings to the cabin owned by the troop in a scout reservation several miles away. The Girl Scout Troop has about 8 members who meet weekly with two of the church women and also for occasional outings. The pastor holds a preparatory membership class each spring in which instruction is given leading to joining the church. There is no program for intermediates or indeed for any of the age groups in the summer since so many of the church families are away during much of the vacation time.

The needs and interests of the intermediates center around a growing individualism which often leads to conflict

with parental ideas. Some of the closest ties in this age are not in the home but are in intimate contacts with clubs or gangs of the same sex. The growing independence seen so often in the home is accompanied by a need for approval from the chosen group. Group activity takes on a very special meaning for the adolescent and satisfies some of his greatest needs. It is a time of high adventure, and, unless opportunities for satisfying this craving for exciting adventures can be satisfied through group activity, there is the constant danger of flight from reality into day-dreaming and fantasy. Behavior of both boys and girls is likely to be unpredictable but needs to be met with helpful understanding. Coercion is resented but democratic leadership is needed and wanted. At an age when hero worship predominates, the group leader may hold the favored place in the child's affections. Rapid development brings physical maturity to many of the girls and stimulates an interest in romance. The boys, developing more slowly, are more interested in physical prowess and seek to win approval by their accomplishments. There is the continuing need for help in developing unique capacities in all the children.

The Senior Department at St. Mark's consists of 25 high school youth who have a Sunday morning class but who center their activities in an evening program. The class, in which 21 of both sexes are enrolled, meets with

the rest of the older children for worship and then has a period of discussion and study. The evening group, known as the Methodist Youth Fellowship, has a 2 hour program which includes worship, either a speaker from outside or a discussion led by a group member, and recreation. Social activities other than the Sunday night meetings are held about twice a month, sometimes as parties at the church and sometimes as outings. Twice a year all-day outings are provided which include a spiritual retreat. Although mid-winter and summer institutes are available through the Methodist Conference, the St. Mark's group has seldom participated.

The high school age shows an increasing interest in group activity and especially in groups that include both sexes. Excellent opportunity for boy and girl friendships are provided through the church group as a naturalness in the presence of the opposite sex is promoted. Since a strong need for group approval and group conformity is felt, then it is all the more important that the group be linked to constructive and altruistic purposes. The active group provides a wide variety of experiences which give opportunity for the release of different types of emotion, a release that is essential for best development. Adolescence is a colorful time of life in which the sense of the dramatic is high. Through drama and through worship the church group satisfies some of this interest. The

911.

church helps, also, in leading the developing youth into a more meaningful relationship with God and the deeper values of life. The adolescent feels the need for a vital religion; he needs to be challenged with opportunities for service. He is receptive to a discovery of vocations that lead to service. The church group can help him to learn to assume responsibility, to accept leadership, and to inspire others. The group activities can help him to broaden his own outlook and his understanding of others. A full program in the church group can help him to relate his social adjustment to the most significant values in life.

The Young People's Department at St. Mark's, known as the Wesley Fellowship, is the largest and most active of the youth organizations. Drawing its membership largely from college students, it has an average attendance of about 50 at its Sunday evening meetings. The program for Sunday evening lasts about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours with worship, speakers and discussion, refreshments and organized recreation. About every six weeks a special social program is planned. The group is largely self-administering although the assistant pastor helps to give it some direction. A number of the group are members of the church choir and many of them attend morning worship regularly.

The needs of the young people are a continuation and maturation of the needs of earlier adolescence. The need for independence reaches its climax here, but along with this

independence is the growing realization of the need for companionship. A security in the assurance that someone cares is essential for happy development, and such an assurance is fostered in the church group. The individual needs to feel that he counts, that he has some status. He needs opportunities to try out his own powers, to grow through intellectual and social stimulus and interaction. His concern over life purposes deepens and his interest in the problems of marriage become more personal. Religion, if it is to interest him at all, must be intensely practical and intellectually respectable. He needs the opportunity that the group can provide for trying out the Christian way of life in a concrete situation.

The Adults

The most recent group to be organized at St. Mark's is the Couples' Club. About 10 couples form the nucleus of this organization although more than twice that number have indicated an interest in the activities. The Club was organized to meet the needs of young married people who wanted to enjoy social activities in the company of congenial persons with similar interests. At present the activities are purely social with monthly meetings at homes or for outings, but it is expected that more serious aspects will be added to the program.

These young couples sense a need for fellowship of

a wholesome and stimulating sort. They feel a kinship with other young adults who are struggling to get started in business, in establishing a home, and in rearing children. They need support and encouragement for maintaining Christian standards at home and at work, the kind of encouragement that comes best from a group. They need practice in assuming leadership and in taking responsibility as adults for the wider areas of community life. They need mutual support and help in the difficult task of being good parents for their growing families.

Among the adults in St. Mark's the most ambitious organization is the Women's Society of Christian Service. As the title implies, the organization is for all of the women of the parish and places its major stress on the service that it can render not only to the local church but also to the Christian community and the Christian world. There are about 200 regular members whose activities are centered in 11 groups of about 18 members each. Each group was originally organized around a nucleus of women either of the same age or of the same interest. The most recently organized, for example, is a group of young, unmarried working women, several of whom live alone in single rooms. The groups meet once a month in the home of one of the members and carry on a wide variety of projects and programs with the dual purpose of raising money for the church and of providing sociability. Generally the group

meetings will include brief devotions, business, work on projects, and sociability. Once a month there is a meeting of the entire society with about 65 attending. It is in these larger meetings that the wider program of service at home and abroad is stressed. Through its committees the society maintains close contact with many agencies in the community and in the larger Methodist Church. There is almost unlimited opportunity for any woman to make a contribution through one of the many activities sponsored by the society.

The Executive Board of the Women's Society consists of 38 members who are the officers, the committee chairmen, the group representatives, and the special representatives to various community agencies. This Board meets monthly in a home for business and for a simple luncheon. This group helps to keep the interests of the Society from becoming too provincial through maintaining close contact with the many interests that lie outside the work of the local church. Another group that helps in this same direction and which adds an even greater service emphasis is the weekly Red Cross and Inter-Church Sewing. For $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours each week about 15 women work at the church on sewing for hospitals, a project which is a part of a larger program sponsored by all the Protestant churches in Brookline and supervised by the local Social Work Agency (The Brookline Friendly Society). The women take their own

lunches and enjoy a rather intimate fellowship in their common work.

Monthly church suppers are sponsored by the Women's Society with committees for each supper representing a cross section of the groups. About 160 men and women are usually present for the supper and the educational or inspirational program which follows. The Women's Society of Christian Service undergirds the entire work of the church through its various committees and responsibilities. With its suppers, its annual fair, and its all-church programs and celebrations it helps to tie together the work of the church into one large family, and through its intimate groups it maintains close contact with most of the women of the church. Its diversified social activities and its service-centered projects, undergirded by an active devotional life, help to provide constructive outlets for the interests and the energies of a great many women. The therapy accomplished in the women's work is not to be underestimated.

The Adult Bible Class, originally sponsored by the Women's Society, now has 66 members who meet Sunday morning during the Sunday School hour for 45 minutes of devotions and study. There is an active program of social activities connected with the class with frequent parties for the married couples and others for the unmarried women.

The men of St. Mark's take care of the business matters

of the church through the Official Board and its committees. Although the monthly meeting is primarily for business, twice a year the meeting is combined with a fellowship dinner. The Official Board directs such activities as the Every-Member Canvass and the special Evangelistic Visitations. A new organization, the Men's Club, developed out of the active interest of the husbands of members of two groups in the Women's Society. Now firmly established, the Men's Club has been successful in enlisting the interest of about 60 men, including a large number of promising young business men. Through its monthly meeting of business, entertainment, and sociability the club is providing opportunity for developing friendships and for making a contribution to the work of the church. The leadership ability being developed in the club is not only helping individuals in personal growth but it also is training for future service in the church. The club underwrites several projects for the improvement of the program and the property of the church and sponsors annual all-church activities such as the church picnic, the Christmas Party, and the Father and Son Banquet.

Significant among other activities for adults is the senior choir of about 30 voices, a mixed group with a wide age span. The choir sings every Sunday, rehearses every week, and carries on various social activities during the year. One special program is presented each year.

Still another group activity is the mid-week Prayer Meeting which is held weekly during Lent. About 25 persons have been interested in this service of song, prayer, preaching, and testimonies.

These organizations for adults at St. Mark's can be of great help in satisfying some of the deepest needs of men and women. The church shows a real concern for its members, seeking them out in sickness and in health, showing that they are wanted. Every person needs some expressions of affection and the intimate church groups can provide it. Moreover, the church through its groups provides opportunity for some degree of achievement. The talents of every person can be used in the total program. The church makes a person feel needed, helps him to discover his particular ability, and aids him in making a contribution. Then, too, the church groups give a person a degree of security. It provides a friendly and understanding community in which the individual is given secure status. It provides a testing ground for growth in social adjustment. Above all, the groups can help the adult to keep growing mentally, socially, and spiritually.

There is one other major aspect of group activity at St. Mark's that has not yet been considered and that is the regular Sunday morning worship service. About 350 people are present regularly on Sunday morning for the service that binds together the many different small group activities.

The active life of the parish centers in the small groups, but it is from the weekly service in the sanctuary of the church that the vitality of the groups stems. There are other ceremonial occasions, too, such as baptisms, reception of members, weddings, and funerals in which the worshipping congregation becomes, in a sense, a therapeutic group.

Significant as the regular services of worship may be, it is nevertheless in the smaller groups that the greatest opportunity lies for the kind of creative growth that serves a therapeutic purpose. The charts given in

Figure 3 summarize the activities in St. Mark's in terms of the age groupings. It is apparent from these charts that there is a wide diversity of activities present in the church through which many of the needs and interests listed can be met. It is the purpose of the remaining section of this dissertation to point out the insights gained from medical group therapy which can be applied to improve the therapeutic possibilities of groups such as those found at St. Mark's.

Before turning to this last section, however, one brief word of evaluation might be said of St. Mark's program. With the possible exception of the younger children's departments, the existing groups provide quite a full program of social activity for most age groups. It is to be

Age	Organization	Members	Sex	Time (Hours)	Activities	Interests and Needs
Nursery Dep't 0-3 years	(Department)	48	M,F			Affection Regularity Worthy ex- ample
	(In homes)				Contacts with par- ents	
	Play group during church	4	M,F	1 a week	Play	
Beginners' Dep't 4-5 yrs	(Department)	18	M,F			Discovery of persons Cooperation Sharing Develop ta- lents and leadership
	1 Sunday School Class	18	M,F	1 a week	Stories Singing Prayers Play	
Primary Dep't 6-8 years	(Department)	24	M,F			Social adjust- ment Encouragement Individuality Purposefulness Cooperation
	3 Sunday School Classes	8	M,F	1 a week	Worship Bible study Handwork Play	
Junior Department 9-11 years	(Department)	26	M,F			Achievement Competition Self-confi- dence Purposefulness Curiosity and exploration Development of self-control Guidance, not coercion
	3 Sunday School Classes	8	M,F	1 a week	Worship Study Handwork	
	Parties	8	M,F	Occa- sional	Play	
	Brownie Scouts	8	F	2 a week (plus)	Scoutcraft Play Outings	
	Junior Choir	10	F	Special events	Singing	

GROUP ACTIVITY IN CHILDREN'S DIVISION IN ST. MARK'S CHURCH

FIGURE 3 (A)

Age	Organization	Members	Sex	Time (Hours)	Activities	Interests and Needs
Intermediate Department 12-14 years	(Department)	20	M,F			Growing individualism
	2 Sunday School Classes	10	M or F	1 a week	Worship Study Projects	Need for approval Adventure Group activity
	Boy Scouts (4 Patrols)	30 8	M	2½ a week (plus)	Scoutcraft Patrol meetings Games	Understanding Democratic leadership Hero worship
	Girl Scouts	8	F	2 a week (plus)	Outings Cf Boy Scouts	Physical prowess (boys) Romance (girls)
	Membership Class (Lent)	6	M,F	1 a week	Study	
Senior Department 15-17 years	(Department)	25	M,F			Group activity Group approval Group conformity
	1 Sunday School Class	12	M,F	1 a week	Worship Discussion Study	Interest in opposite sex Wide experiences
	Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF)	25	M,F	2 a week	Worship Speaker and discussion Recreation	Altruism and idealism Color and drama
	MYF Socials, Outings	25	M,F	3 bi-monthly	Recreation	Meaningful religion Status Responsibility
Young People's Dep't 18-24 years	(Department)	70	M,F			(Continuation of seniors)
	Wesley Fellowship	50	M,F	2½ a week	Worship Speakers Discussion Recreation	Independence Companionship Marriage Security in affection
	Socials, Outings	50	M,F	3½ in 6 weeks	Recreation	Intellectual, social growth Life purposes deepen
	Senior Choir (See adults)	15	M,F	3 a week	Singing Socials	

GROUP ACTIVITIES IN YOUTH DIVISION IN ST. MARK'S CHURCH

FIGURE 3 (B)

Age	Organization	Members	Sex	Time (Hours)	Activities	Interests and Needs
Young Adults c. 24-35 yrs	Couples' Club	24	M,F	3 a month	Social	Wholesome fellowship Standards for homes Encouragement Leadership and responsibility
Adults (over 24 yrs)	Sunday Morn- ing Worship (All ages)	(325)	M,F	1½ a week	Worship Sermon Fellowship	(General needs for all the adults)
	Prayer Meet- ing (Lent)	25	M,F	1 a week	Worship Sermon Testimonies Fellowship	Some success Some recogni- tion through contribution Some affection
	Women's Soci- ety of Chris- tian Service (W.S.C.S.)	200	F	2½ a month	Devotions Education Missions Projects Business Sociability	Broaden inter- ests Mature faith Continue growth
	11 Groups in W.S.C.S.	18	F	3 a month	Devotions Business Projects Sociability	
	Executive Board of W.S.C.S.	38	F	1½ a month	Business Sociability Luncheon	
	Church Sup- per by W.S.C.S.	(160)	M,F	2½ a month	Supper Speaker Fellowship	
	Red Cross Sewing	15	F	4½ a week	Service Luncheon Sociability	
	Adult Bible Class (Continued)	66	M,F	1 a week (plus)	Worship Study Parties	

GROUP ACTIVITIES AMONG ADULTS IN ST. MARK'S CHURCH

FIGURE 3 (C,1)

Age	Organization	Members	Sex	Time (Hours)	Activities	Interests and Needs
Adults (Continued)	Men's Club	60	M	3 a month	Business Projects of service Recreation Speakers, discussion Sociability	(See under adults)
	Official Board	35	M	1 a month	Business	
	Senior Choir	35	M,F	3 a week (plus)	Singing Parties	

GROUP ACTIVITY AMONG ADULTS (Continued) IN ST. MARK'S CHURCH

FIGURE 3 (C,2)

questioned, however, if the many small groups existing within the church are engaged in the kinds of experiences that aid in the growth of healthier personality. Even the finest teacher can do very little to assist the members of a class in the brief time allotted in the Sunday morning session, and unless the Sunday School work is supplemented by other more creative experiences it is doubtful if much is being accomplished. The class marks the beginning for possible wholesome interaction, but too often it never gets beyond the first step. How group therapy can help in improving the work of the church class is the concern of this chapter.

The adults at St. Mark's have a wide variety of activities to choose from and are well supplied with frequent social outlets through the church, but again, as with the children, it is to be questioned if the church groups are answering the needs of the members in a truly therapeutic way. It is doubtful if there is much opportunity provided for the sharing of common problems, for mutual expression of common concern, for mutual appreciation of common needs. The need is for more intimate groups in which fellowship of a creative nature can be developed in which the faith that the church preaches can be experienced. It is in the development of such groups that group therapy can give some helpful direction.

3. A RECOGNITION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

The first major insight of importance to the church that has come from group therapy is the recognition of the primacy of interpersonal relations. Psychiatry is slowly recognizing that the integration of an individual is not the final goal. Dr. Braceland states the situation clearly:

No matter how well integrated the individual may appear to be, the fact remains that unless he can take his place in the group or society in which he lives he will inevitably develop psychologic symptoms which will indicate maladjustment.¹¹

That sociological concepts are being introduced into psychiatry is made clear in the title of the journal which Sullivan edits: Psychiatry: Journal of the Biology and Pathology of Interpersonal Relations. Sullivan defines personality as "the relatively enduring pattern of recurrent interpersonal situations which characterize a human life."¹² This stress on interpersonal relations makes it clear that less and less is it possible to separate the fields of individual and group psychology. For the most part, the person in trouble is an

11. Francis J. Braceland, "Group Psychotherapy," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 45.

12. Harry S. Sullivan, Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry (Washington, D. C.: The William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation, 1945), vi.

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The first major factor in the development of the modern scientific method is the rise of the scientific revolution in the sixteenth century. This was a period of great intellectual activity, and it was during this time that the scientific method was first developed. The scientific method is a systematic way of investigating the natural world, and it is based on the use of observation, experimentation, and logical reasoning. The scientific method has been the basis of all modern science, and it has led to the discovery of many of the laws of nature.

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individual whose great need is for a supporting community, a group which gives him acceptance, support and unconditional love. Therapeutic groups are providing for such a need, and in doing so are showing the church the need for a re-discovery of the possibilities in the interpersonal situation called religious fellowship. It seems somewhat incongruous that medical circles and indeed the whole field of psychology should be reminding the church of one of its basic functions, but such is exactly the case. Therapists are insisting that identification with other persons and with groups is an integral part of the healing process for many of these patients. This is but a reiteration of the need felt by Christians throughout all ages of the history of the church, and a need which the church can fulfill to a greater degree than any secular agency.

The significance of the relation of one person to another in an actual social setting has received little attention from the church. Groups for social intercourse have certainly existed, but when the church has sought to help its members to understand themselves and their world it has used the methods of intellectual indoctrination. The minister in the pulpit, the discussion leader in the young people's group, the Sunday School teacher in her class, the missionary chairman in the women's society have all attempted to guide behavior and mold interests and attitudes through imparting information. But far more

successful than any intellectual process of handing down factual data is the method of living through an experience and thus gaining first hand understanding. The most intensive group therapy yielding the most lasting results has been that in which the emphasis was placed on using the group for a laboratory in life. And if it is true for group therapy, it is even more true for church work. A religious weltanschauung cannot be secured through indoctrination or through listening to sermons regardless of how effective they may be. The deeper meanings of religion "are achieved", as Carroll Wise points out, "only through experiences that involve the whole person in all his relationships...Each person must work out the meaning of life in his own experience."¹³ The history of church groups itself verifies this principle. Religion has meant the most to those who have actively experienced it in intimate, creative fellowship groups where study and worship and work have been combined. The very fact of the need for the Iona community is evidence that the average church to-day knows little about experiencing the faith and indeed scarcely realizes that such a need exists. S. M. Shoemaker sums up the current situation in these words: "It is clearly untrue to the Christian heritage, and unhappy

13. Religion in Illness and Health, 147.

in its effects, that our people should be so almost universally exposed to the ideas of their faith, and almost universally kept from experiencing it together."¹⁴

The church seeks to aid in personal growth, but growth cannot be accomplished in a vacuum. It goes on, as Baxter and Cassidy show, "...in the matrix of life and learning, in the constant action and interaction of human beings, living in and through the infinite acts of their daily lives.." ¹⁵ The child can hardly be expected to understand the concept of Christian brotherhood until he has learned something about co-operation and team-work in actual situations. It is through the child's social interactions that a growing Christian experience is possible. The Church School class, as George A. Coe indicates, is not so much a class to be taught as it is a little society in which love can be experienced and practiced and made into a deliberate pattern for living.¹⁶ It is significant to recall the

14. How You Can Help Other People, 92.

15. Bernice Baxter and Rosalind Cassidy, Group Experience, the Democratic Way (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1943), 2.

16. Cf. George A. Coe, A Social Theory of Religious Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), 80.

emphasis given by Lazell, Pratt and Hauptmann that in their therapy groups the intellectual content of the talks was less important than the atmosphere created and the opportunities for social experiences provided. Coe insists likewise that the primary task of Christian education is the creation of the situation in which the child can be introduced to the joy of being a contributing member of a society. The task is then one of helping the child to "define, understand, and improve something that he is already doing and enjoying."¹⁷

It is not easy for many religious leaders to accept the idea that desirable social attitudes tend to develop faster and with a more lasting nature through group experience than through persuasive preaching. It is difficult for these same leaders to see that pastoral counseling is best understood as something far removed from the giving of advice. Growth both in socially accepted behavior and in integrated personal living, however, comes best through actual experiences, as therapeutic groups have shown, where in a kindly but controlled environment the individual is given the opportunity of testing out his attitudes, using the group he is in as a sounding board. Modification of unaccepted behavior is accomplished through group disapproval, but at the same time the ties of comradeship

17. Ibid., 82.

in the group prevent rejection. The neophyte Christian should be given opportunity to understand that his religion is more than lip service or cadenced ritual. In the church group he can find a concrete contact with life in which he can test out the ethical values and spiritual resources of his religion. Like the member of the therapy group he knows that he is not playing for keeps, that he has still another chance. His hesitant and only half-formed ideas are gladly welcomed and thoughtfully considered. Through interaction with others his ideas are modified; with the help of others his growth is encouraged.

4. THE ROLE OF THE LEADER

Such a use of a church group, however, implies the right atmosphere, and in the creation of the atmosphere the leader plays a significant role. There, again, the church can gain real insight from work done in group therapy. The church has long recognized the need for capable leadership in group activity, but it has not always fully appreciated the need for a positive relationship between member and leader if therapy is to result. The main motivating factor in the modification of behavior in a group is a positive feeling for the leader. In the creation of this positive feeling the personality of the leader becomes especially significant. Klapman points out

that the basic qualification for a medical therapist is not necessarily psychoanalytic training but is rather a warm-hearted personality. Technical knowledge is not enough; it must be supplemented with a sympathetic understanding of human nature.¹⁸ The minister is inclined to place great stress on what he says, but the effective therapist is successful in part at least for what he is. Dr. Pratt is an excellent example of this point as Richard Cabot shows:

No one else was as warm-hearted as he, no one else enjoyed meeting his patients so much, was as pleased with every little success and as confident of eventual recovery. Hopefulness and buoyancy like his, when joined to his natural liking for all sorts of people, make him a very powerful therapeutic instrument.¹⁹

The Classes in Applied Psychology have illustrated some of the techniques that are used for the specific purpose of stimulating a helpful relationship with the leader. From carefully recorded interviews the leader knows the individual patients. He makes a point of getting acquainted before and after class. He recognizes the individual in the roll call, recognizes him again in the progress reports, and gives him opportunity to speak in discussion. He uses every

18. Cf. Klapman, Group Psychotherapy, 236.

19. "Joseph H. Pratt: An Appreciation," Anniversary Volume: Scientific Contributions in Honor of Joseph Hersey Pratt on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday (Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Lancaster Press, Inc., 1937), xxvi.

available means to stimulate a warmly empathetic relationship. Similar techniques might well be used in some church groups. Although the leader works in a group, he never loses sight of the individual. The group does not exist as an end in itself; it exists for its individual members.

The building of this positive relationship begins with the leader's attitude toward himself. The successful therapist exudes a spirit of optimism and faith. He believes in his methods and so inspires others to believe, too. A comment made by one of the older members of the morning Class in Applied Psychology went something like this: "Just to look at Professor Johnson is to gain confidence. You can tell from his expression and from his attitude that he's well adjusted." Certainly Dr. Pratt conveyed much of this same spirit, not through his words but simply through his manner.

The therapist's belief in himself and his methods and his message is essential for all successful leadership. Such a belief grows out of a good knowledge of people, of their needs, and of their problems, and it is only through intimate contact with and study of people that such knowledge is obtained. The contemporary emphasis on clinical training for theological students is a trend toward better preparation in dealing with personal needs. Just as the medical therapist takes to his work a vast background

of study and clinical understanding, so the minister or the religious worker needs a careful preparation. The therapist knows the individuals in his group and knows them well. They are not simply a class to be taught; they are individuals to be understood.

This faith in himself comes to the group leader, too, as he understands the nature of his work. The group therapist knows groups of many sorts. He has studied into group interactions and knows some of the possibilities of group processes. The minister, too, needs to know groups. He needs to approach many different types of groups in the community, not in a suspicious and hostile spirit as one who resents activities that compete with his program, but as one who wants to study in a friendly and constructive spirit. As he studies groups of all sorts the religious leader becomes mindful of the group influences that have played significant roles in his own life. His increased understanding of groups and of their role help him to gain new confidence in himself as a guide in group work.

Like the therapist, the minister or religious leader believes in himself because he understands the principles behind his methods and because he builds on a secure foundation of knowledge. But the Christian leader has still another basis for confidence. He speaks and works not only by himself but also as the interpreter of Jesus of Nazareth. He is helping to mediate the power that has transformed lives

through the ages. Johnson calls the miracles of religious healing miracles of interpersonal relations. "When a person radiates the religious attitudes of faith, hope, and love he may become a therapist to those who feel the same attitude responding in them."²⁰ The leader who exhibits something of the integrated personality that was evident in Christ, who has a deep love for men, and who looks on the universe as essentially friendly need have no fear about his effectiveness. The medical therapist carries the authority of science; the well trained religious leader carries the authority of his specialized knowledge plus a sense of mission as a follower of Christ and a co-worker with God.

The positive transference relationship begins with the therapist's belief in himself, and until that belief is developed there can be little vital feeling of sympathy with others. The theological implications of loving thy neighbor as thyself are borne out by psychology as it becomes clear that love of others begins with a recognition of one's own worth. To move from a belief in self to a belief in others calls first for this primary recognition of one's personal worth. The least autocratic leader is the one who is so sure of his own position that he does

20. Paul E. Johnson, "Religious Psychology and Health," Mental Hygiene, 31 (October, 1947), 566.

not need to compel blind obedience, and, conversely, the unsure leader feels obligated to dictate if he is to lead at all. Many medical therapists have found it difficult to step down from the dictatorial role to take their place, as Schilder recommended, as one of the group. Accustomed to unquestioned acceptance of diagnosis and prescribed treatment, it is not easy to put any faith in the ability of the untrained to attain desirable therapeutic results even with guidance. A basic concept, however, in psychoanalysis is that the removal of obstructions and conflicts enables the individual patient to make his own successful adjustment.

Thus belief in others follows directly upon belief in self. It is no easier for the religious leader really to accept this viewpoint than it has been for many doctors. In his own way the minister is given a position of tremendous autocratic control. In preaching, in administration, in moral judgements his is often the final word. The non-directive approach in counseling as advocated by Rogers²¹ is often completely contrary to the training and the inclination of the minister. Nevertheless, a sincere belief in others and in their ability to work out their own problems under guidance is one of the essentials in developing the warm, positive feeling which good therapeutic

21. Cf. Carl Rogers, Counseling and Psychotherapy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942).

results require. After all, it is preeminently the approach of Jesus. Throughout his ministry it was his belief in individuals that was the first step in their transformation. To Zacchaeus, to Mary Magdalene, to the Samaritan woman at the well his message was the same - - that under God they had the power to remake their lives. To be sure, as Jesus clearly saw, guidance is needed, but the guidance is secondary to the fundamental belief in the individual himself and in his ability. The successful group leader, whether he be therapist or religious worker, sees the individual in all of his potentialities, loves him as he is, and helps him to realize what he may become.

The effective therapist believes, moreover, not only in himself and in others but also in the potentialities of the group. He recognizes that group interaction itself is a powerful instrument in modifying behavior. As a result of this recognition he allows group processes to operate without dictatorial control. He is willing to subordinate himself to the group in the interests of the greater development of all the members. He becomes a part of the group, sharing in its life. Just as the analytic therapist places himself in the group as one human being striving with others toward common goals, so the minister needs to become a part of the group, ready and eager to test out the Christian way of life in concrete group situations and in the presence of real issues. The therapist

understands that group interaction moves slowly and that results cannot be expected immediately. As was pointed out in the discussion of the Classes in Applied Psychology, the neurotic individual cannot be driven; he needs to be inspired to move forward slowly at the pace he chooses for himself. The techniques devised for the Boston Dispensary work take this factor into account. The group leader takes notice of the fumbling efforts at corporate activity and gives quick recognition to any success achieved.

The religious leader learns from the therapists that the group itself is the therapeutic agent. It is not a matter of helping individuals who happen incidentally to be in a group; rather it is a question of helping individuals through the group. It is the group which dispels isolation and gives reassurance; it is the group which gives status and recognition; it is the group which develops the feeling of belonging and the sense of being needed; it is the group which renews hope and stimulates improvement; it is the group which gives or withholds approval and so modifies behavior; it is the group which lowers resistance to new ideas and which hastens a positive transference with the leader. It is one of the keen insights of group therapy that has deep significance for church work that mal-adjustments in personal relations are most effectively relieved and corrected in a concrete social experience.

In addition to establishing a warm, positive

relationship with group members, the leader serves at least three specific functions. He serves as an integrating factor in the group. The group gains unity through its relationship to him. He personifies the aims and the life of the group and helps to keep the activities on a plane that will further the goal. The leader serves also as a catalyst. He helps to establish the atmosphere in which creative interaction can take place. His attitude of friendly appreciation sets up like attitudes in the other members of the group. Under his leadership an atmosphere of acceptance is established which is conducive to the release of repressed feelings without the consequence of retaliation or rejection. Slavson has shown very clearly that insight can be reached only after release has been obtained through a spirit of acceptance. Growth, the goal toward which the minister is generally working, comes at the end of the process after some measure of insight has been gained.

In addition, the leader exercises a degree of control over the interaction in the group. The needs of individuals within the group vary and the leader's part lies in trying to help the group to meet each individual need. Moreno points out how the leader is an auxiliary ego to all others in the group and shows how Jesus served in such a capacity.²²

22. Cf. Moreno, Psychodrama, I, 240-41.

The leader assists each one in the group in fulfilling his need. Some members need to obtain ego satisfaction in the group; others need their viewpoints modified. The therapist's task is to recognize the various forces present and to aid in effecting a reconciliation among them. The point has been continually made throughout this dissertation that it is creative interaction which works for therapy in a group. Where such interaction has ceased or has been stifled by a rigid organization or by intrenched leadership or by indifferent inertia, then the leader needs to step in. One of the greatest needs in church groups such as are present in St. Mark's is for leadership to stimulate the kind of interaction that leads to creativity. The atmosphere in which such interaction can take place is the next topic for consideration.

5. THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE GROUP

It has already been suggested that the leader establishes to a large degree the atmosphere of the group. Just what this atmosphere is needs to be further expounded. From therapy groups comes the concept of a permissive atmosphere, an atmosphere in which complete acceptance of any behavior is found. Slavson has made extensive use of this principle but he makes it clear that such an atmosphere is neither possible nor desirable for the average group. Speaking of activity-therapy groups he says: "Even the fairly well-adjusted or 'average' child would be greatly harmed

if his already acquired super-ego were to be given a holiday."²³ This completely permissive atmosphere is not suited to normal groups such as are found in the church; nevertheless, it does suggest the direction that needs to be taken if therapy is to result. A better designation for the atmosphere of church groups is the term "voluntary" as proposed by R. H. Edwards.²⁴

The voluntary group is one in which leadership is by winsomeness rather than by autocratic control. It is the method that is fundamental to democracy, a method that gives so much respect to the individual human personality that domination by coercion is deliberately refused. It is the method which invites creativity and growth through the creation of a favorable environment. It has been shown in many instances that therapy flourishes best in a happy environment. Indeed, one of the great advantages of the use of groups for therapy is that the social situation creates a happy atmosphere more readily. Marsh deliberately aimed at making his patients happy. "When a man is happy," he said, "he is in a state of mind in which his energy is free to flow

23. Slavson, An Introduction to Group Therapy, 8.

24. Cf. A Person-Minded Ministry, 172-74.

outward."²⁵ Wender's small groups meet in a comfortable lounging room that is reminiscent of an exclusive men's club and conducive to congenial informality. Pratt's classes have always been happy occasions, pleasant social hours in which strong feelings of camaraderie have been established. It is this happy sort of spirit that the voluntary or democratic method creates.

The democratic method in group activity is widely recognized but actually seldom utilized. Kurt Lewin has directed the carrying out of some highly significant experiments in defining democratic leadership as contrasted with other types. He makes it very clear that democracy is not a laissez-faire situation in which the leader does nothing, nor is it merely a sugar coated autocracy in which the group is induced to follow the leader's will. He states it concisely in these words:

The average Sunday-School teacher, foreman or university professor is accustomed to perceive problems of discipline or leadership as lying on a single continuum, in which lack of discipline and maximum individual freedom represent the one end and strict authoritarian discipline the other.²⁶

25. "Group Treatment of the Psychoses by the Psychological Equivalent of the Revival," 342.

26. Kurt Lewin, "The Practicality of Democracy," Gardner Murphy, editor, Human Nature and Enduring Peace (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1945), 303.

Instead of being something part way between laissez-faire and autocracy, democracy is in a triangular relationship to these other points of view and is quite different from them. Adler, Lippitt, and White conducted an elaborate experiment under Lewin's direction in which three small clubs of 11 year old boys were subjected to change of leadership resulting in the creation of democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire atmospheres.²⁷ All other factors were kept constant. Through this experiment the exact results of varying types of leadership came to light. It also helps to clarify the meaning of democratic leadership. In the laissez-faire type, the leader was as passive as possible with the result that the boys felt hemmed in psychologically by their own lack of knowledge and so became bored, discontented and irritable. In the autocratic group where the leader determined all policies and dictated all techniques, the boys became either very apathetic or very tense, quarrelsome, and irritable. The same boys, however, responded excellently to the democratic method in which the group determined its own policies through discussion with the encouragement and assistance of the leader and chose its own techniques with alternative ideas being offered now and then by the

27. Adler, Don, Ronald Lippitt and Ralph White, "An Experiment with Young People under Democratic, Autocratic, and Laissez-faire Atmosphere," Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 152-58.

leader. The leader became a member of the group, doing only his share of the work but helping to provide enthusiasm and inspiration for the others. In criticism he was objective or fact minded.

The results of the experiment showed a clear preference by the boys for the democratic type. Out of 20 boys, 19 had more fun in the democratic situation and the one exception was a boy whose father was in military service. More self-reliance and genuine interest developed in the democratic type; more initiative was shown in starting at work before the leader's arrival. No noticeable difference occurred when the leader left the room although quarreling in the autocratic group increased 10 times by actual count in a similar situation. Group spirit, friendliness, and less hostility marked the democratic group.

The creation of such a democratic or voluntary atmosphere is one of the chief responsibilities of the religious leader. This atmosphere is one in which creative interaction can take place resulting in progressive growth. S. H. Foulkes shows how significant it is for the therapist to put away the autocratic role with group members.

If the psychotherapist resists the temptation to be made a leader, he will be rewarded by their growing independence, spontaneity, and responsibility and personal insight into their social attitudes. It happens in exact proportion to the psychiatrist's art of making

This is not to say that the leader plays a wholly passive role. The insistence is simply the same as that made in the Adler, Lippitt and White experiment, that the most satisfactory results grow out of the atmosphere in which the group member takes a creative role. The voluntary principle is deeply imbedded in Christianity. The Christian faith is one of inner discipline based on voluntary choice. The life of the spirit is one which grows through creative efforts, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."²⁹

6. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE GROUP IN TERMS OF PURPOSE

The democratic atmosphere is the prerequisite for creative growth, but by itself it does not guarantee such a desirable goal. In all therapeutic groups a further consideration is the organization of the unit. Therapy groups are not simply collections of individuals casually called together. Instead they are groups of carefully selected persons who are brought together because of some common need or interest that makes for unity and coherence.

28. "Principles and Practice of Group Therapy," Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic, 10 (May, 1946), 86.

29. Mark 4:28.

There can be no truly therapeutic group unless there is some specific identity and if religious groups are to accomplish any therapy the same must hold true.

Therapy groups were classified by Solby³⁰ as having 1) identity of symptoms (e.g. psychosomatic disorders), 2) identity of social status (e.g. military personnel), or 3) identity of a formulated goal (e.g. religion in its institutionalized form). Solby found that the therapeutic results appeared "to be proportionate to the degree of identity achieved in the individuals selected to participate in the procedure."³¹ The significance of this emphasis for church work lies in the realization that groups must be designed to satisfy more than simple gregarious desires if they are to be effective in being of any significant help. There must be strong ties of interests and needs and most of all of purpose which can unify the group into a cohesive body if therapeutic results are to be forthcoming. Solby's classification of religious groups as therapeutic agents when there is a strong identity in a well formulated goal is of real

30. Bruno Solby, "Group Psychotherapy and the Psychodramatic Method," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 51.

31. Loc. cit.

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significance to the church. It is one of the distinctive marks of the church group, that it has a purposive nature in seeking to discover what religion has to offer toward solving the problems of every day life. It is only when the church group gives conscious recognition to its purpose that it becomes a therapeutic agent.

Such an identity of purpose develops, as in all therapy groups, with a recognition of individual needs. The group does not exist as an end in itself; it exists to serve as a medium through which individuals can grow. Grace Coyle has made some pertinent observations about "service" projects, such as the giving of Thanksgiving baskets or the entertaining of orphans, as carried out by some church groups. "The contribution," she said, "of such programs to vital social understanding or to democratic attitudes is questionable to say the least."³² Her point is that the group was being used to further a purpose often far removed from the young person's needs, interests, or reactions. The effectiveness of any group program depends on to what degree the activity derives from the needs of the members.

32. Grace L. Coyle, "Education for Social Action," Lieberman, editor, New Trends in Group Work, 7-8.

To be therapeutically efficacious, the activity must come from the member and not from the leader although the leader plays a significant role in taking the cue from partially expressed needs or interests. The implications of this stress on beginning with the individual rather than with the group are quite tremendous. The success of the program is, then, a minor consideration except as it affects the individual. Church groups often stress the success of the program to the point that inappropriate members are eliminated, thus tending to personal frustration and maladjustment already present. The therapy group, on the other hand, directs its attention toward helping the odd stick to fit in with the others. The program itself is designed to contribute to his specific need by providing socializing opportunities. If the group activities in the church are centered around individuals, then it will be recognized that the mischievous boys or troublesome adults are the ones who need satisfying group experience the most. There will be equal concern with the quiet, unobtrusive person who takes no initiative, asserts no independence, or shows no individuality. Moreover, those who find it difficult to enter into group life or who are easily hurt in interpersonal situations will be recognized as ones who need to raise their frustration tolerance through interaction in group associations.

In meeting the need for group association the therapeutic situation sets its sights on even broader interpersonal contacts. Not only is interaction stimulated among the members, but the experience in the group is understood as a proving ground for broader contacts in the future. The goal is the adjustment of the individual in a small segment of society so that he will then be able to take his place with greater ease and satisfaction in a larger society. McDougall makes this same emphasis as he says that there are two processes essential for the development of the group spirit: a free intercourse within the group and a free intercourse between the group and other groups.³³ If a group is to serve its best therapeutic purpose, then, it must not be ingrown. The smugly self-contained clique, so easily developed in church groups, not only misses the opportunity for making a wholesome contribution to a growing experience of its members, but it even tends to check normal growth. Excessive loyalty to a group tends to restrict activity to levels of petty interests and tends to prevent criticism and evaluation. Group introversion can have the same

33. The Group Mind, 121.

effect as individual introversion. One of the signs of a group that is healthy and that is promoting healthy attitudes is an outgoing interest that draws new members into the organization and that keeps alive its activities with other groups. Alcoholics Anonymous owes much of its potency to its principle of outgoing aid. Testimonies to others of individual help received have always been evidence of effective outreaching groups whether in therapeutic situations or in the church. The most flourishing churches to-day are those which have strong community and missionary interests.

7. THE STRUCTURE OF THE GROUP

Even a well organized group, however, is not always suited to therapeutic purposes and so another insight from group therapy is needed. Sometimes it is necessary to manipulate the structure of the group, to change its personnel, to alter its program, to introduce new leaders. Ackerman showed the need for modifying group organization in these words:

If the group becomes too highly organized, its structure tends to become static and relatively inflexible. To the extent to which this occurs, it may hinder the spontaneous flow of emotion and discourage mobile changes in the relationship patterns.³⁴

34. Nathan W. Ackerman, "Group Therapy from the Viewpoint of a Psychiatrist," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 13 (October, 1943), 682.

Slavson in his activity-therapy found it necessary to make changes in the groups from time to time in order to keep the interpersonal relationship from becoming too rigid. Moreno's sociometric studies brought out the need for changing members from group to group in order to satisfy their particular needs. The plan for cottage life as worked out at the New York State Training School for Girls called for the careful selection of girls for each cottage and the careful choice of the right leader for each group. Roy Burkhart found that two of his circles of young married couples did not work out as originally planned and so effected a redistribution to make for more compatible membership.³⁵ In a similar way the arbitrary grouping of Church School pupils by age without any consideration of neighborhood associations might well be considered if the goal is actually aid in total personality growth. If growth is thought of in terms of concrete interpersonal situations, then associations other than those around the lesson table are significant, too.

Efforts at structuring the groups, however, are not to be thought of as hit or miss experiments but rather as carefully designed procedures based on objective evidence.

35. Cf. I Am Community Church, 11.

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Therapy groups can be used for gaining help in group work because of the careful records that have been made and analyzed of group interactions. The religious leader is compelled to go to other than religious records because of the paucity of material available from careful research in church work. Interaction and interrelations within groups can be observed and can be objectively recorded as the experiments done under Lewin's guidance have shown. Even the untrained research worker can write up objective recordings of the development of group experience, and if therapeutic results are to be achieved, such records are of the greatest importance.

Along with the records there is a need for leadership supervision and leadership training. Therapy groups in the military service were often carried on by psychiatrically oriented enlisted personnel under the direction of a medical officer.³⁶ Leadership training plus regular evaluation conferences were an accepted part of the program. Hadden has shown how he has trained therapists through participation in his regular classes and Moreno's

36. Cf. Maurice R. Friend and Walter F. Sullivan, "Group Psychotherapy in an Army General Hospital Relating to Civilian Readjustment," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 2 (April, 1947), 254—65.

psychodramatic techniques have been rather widely used in making training more realistic.³⁷ Such leadership training and supervision suggest the importance of developing helpers and point to the need for assisting volunteer church workers in their efforts. The more the minister can help his volunteer workers and organizational officers to see the possibilities in group interaction, the more creative the fellowship of the church will become. The unique nature of this creative fellowship is the next topic for consideration.

8. RELIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP AS CREATIVE INTERACTION

The need for interacting groups has constantly been stressed throughout this dissertation. Religiously speaking, the need is for creative fellowship, and although the church is available to meet that need, there is no point in its program at which it is weaker. The lack of vitality in twentieth century Christianity can be traced to a large degree to this lack of a dynamic Christian fellowship.

37. Cf. Margaret Hagan and Edith Wright, "Psychodramatic Techniques as a Teaching Device in an Accelerated Course for Workers with Neuropsychiatric Patients," Moreno, editor, Group Psychotherapy: A Symposium, 146-50.

The very prevalence and growing strength of the pentacostal type of emotional religion which places high stress on intimate fellowship is an indication of the failure of the established churches to meet this need. It is no wonder that the present age is one of increasing secularism and skepticism with a corresponding decrease of spirituality and faith, for faith thrives only in the midst of a community of believers. It "is promoted," as Stolz said, "in those who share the fellowship of the believers through instruction, correction, encouragement, and overt expression."³⁸

The need for a rediscovery of Christian fellowship, however, is gradually being seen and group therapy is adding the weight of objective facts to hasten the process. The feelings of helplessness and isolation so characteristic of such a large segment of our civilization are found to respond to the therapy of an interpersonal situation where energies can be liberated for more satisfactory adjustment. The social effectiveness of any person, as Swift pointed out, is found to depend in a large degree on the opportunity which

38. Stolz, The Church and Psychotherapy, 77.

is given to him to make individual activity effective in group activities.³⁹ Indeed, Karen Horney goes so far as to say that neurotic conflicts of even a severe type can sometimes be resolved in "association with persons so congenial that manipulating or avoiding them appears less necessary."⁴⁰ Such associations and such group activities can be provided by the church.

The need to-day is for more than superficial comradeship. There are group activities of every conceivable sort infesting American communities to-day exercising considerable significance in social, political, industrial, cultural and religious life. Edwards cites an English joke, that "if three Americans fell out of an airplane together they would organize on the way down and elect a president, a secretary, and a treasurer before they got to earth."⁴¹ However, even though the American scene is alive with group organizations, they are, nevertheless, not filling the real need. The criticism already made of much group work in the church applies even more to secular clubs.

39. Arthur L. Swift, New Frontiers of Religion, 150.

40. Our Inner Conflicts (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1945), 240.

41. A Person-Minded Ministry, 154.

They are often not oriented to the individual and his needs and as a result can scarcely be expected to serve a therapeutic end. Church groups, on the other hand, through their very connection with the Christian faith, have high therapeutic potentialities. Stolz sets a high ideal in these words:

The claim is not advanced that Church fellowship can cure all the major psychoses that psychiatry has listed; but the assertion is provable that lively participation in the community of believers forestalls most of the grave mental derangements, imparts courage to bear the mental agony of fatal bodily disease, banishes a multitude of neuroses which plague mankind, and disperses the psychological stresses which accompany a wide range of organic ailments.⁴²

The specific values which are inherent in the Christian fellowship and which when utilized can lead to such desirable ends are the next consideration.

Church fellowship promotes wholesome personality through identification with a group engaged in purposeful activity. A common goal and belief personified in the minister, encourage church members to identify themselves with each other. The significance of ever widening identifications, with larger and larger groups, has been stressed many times in this dissertation as the basis of all growth. The church group provides for such identification with like-minded individuals, with the immediate goals

42. The Church and Psychotherapy, 89.

of group, with the ultimate purpose of the church. The church group neither asks nor desires that all purposes and aspirations be the same, but the church does provide a common cause in the interests of which the purposes of all can interact with mutual benefit. The church provides more than a meeting place of common interests; it provides for the sharing of common values. One of Roy Burkhart's young adults expresses it in these words:

We love this group, for it is the only fellowship we know where you are free to talk about what you really think in your heart, where you are not encouraged to drink, and where there isn't any pressure to trade sexually.⁴³

There is a higher loyalty in a commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord that gives unified purpose to the activities of the groups.

Church fellowship, moreover, serves a creative purpose by stressing the uniqueness of each individual. Because every person is recognized as a child of God having unlimited possibilities there are no barriers that keep some out. Differences of endowment or of background become insignificant in the church fellowship. There is no

43. Quoted by Burkhart, The Church and the Returning Soldier (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1945, 35.

rejection because of race or rank but instead there is a companionship of persons on equal and friendly terms. Moreover, each individual is encouraged to make his own contribution to the group. His confidence is enlarged in the exercise of his abilities whether they be great or small. In a friendly and congenial atmosphere each person is stimulated to fulfill his greatest possibilities. Through interaction with his fellow-members he finds his own highest fulfillment.

To be sure, such fellowship is more of an ideal than an actuality, but it is the type of fellowship that belongs in the church and that can be developed there for therapeutic ends. It is the type of fellowship that is being rediscovered in war torn Europe where destroyed churches have necessitated smaller and more intimate meetings within the homes of the members. It is the sort of fellowship that the Iona Community has sought to develop and which all creative groups in the history of the church have had as their goal. It is a fellowship which the church has all but lost sight of but which can be developed through existing groups. The church groups offer enough stability to make possible the careful nurture of growth in the slow process of learning through democratic interaction. The organization of the church is broad enough and flexible enough to expand to meet the needs of almost

all types of persons. The need for vital fellowship is very real. The church has the organization required; group therapy has brought forth the insights needed. As the church utilizes these insights it can rediscover the lost radiance of Christian fellowship and can regain its lost function of ministering to the sick souls of men.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

1. SUMMARY

The argument of this dissertation is summarized under several points.

1. The church has always been interested in aiding maladjusted people and has used group activity for this purpose but such work has been carried on with little realization of the great therapeutic possibilities that lie in group association. The church needs to know more about group dynamics and needs to understand what methods are effective in channeling these dynamics in the direction of personality growth. The best documented and most helpful studies in this field have come from medical group therapy and so it is from this field that the church can gain real knowledge and insight.

2. Since the dynamics at work in groups of all types are found to be fundamentally the same, it is therefore possible to discover the forces operating in church groups by studying medical groups that have been designed particularly for psychotherapy. The dynamics operating in such groups can be classified in terms of their structure and of their function.

The most significant structures or mechanisms are:

THEORY

CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the basic concepts of the theory.

These concepts are:

1. The concept of a group (see Introduction in Volume I).

2. The concept of a ring (see Introduction in Volume I).

3. The concept of a field (see Introduction in Volume I).

4. The concept of a vector space (see Introduction in Volume I).

5. The concept of a linear transformation (see Introduction in Volume I).

6. The concept of a matrix (see Introduction in Volume I).

7. The concept of a determinant (see Introduction in Volume I).

8. The concept of a characteristic polynomial (see Introduction in Volume I).

9. The concept of a minimal polynomial (see Introduction in Volume I).

10. The concept of a cyclic group (see Introduction in Volume I).

11. The concept of a simple group (see Introduction in Volume I).

12. The concept of a normal subgroup (see Introduction in Volume I).

13. The concept of a quotient group (see Introduction in Volume I).

14. The concept of a direct product (see Introduction in Volume I).

15. The concept of a semi-direct product (see Introduction in Volume I).

16. The concept of a wreath product (see Introduction in Volume I).

17. The concept of a permutation group (see Introduction in Volume I).

18. The concept of a symmetric group (see Introduction in Volume I).

19. The concept of an alternating group (see Introduction in Volume I).

1) interstimulation, which is the intensification of the central emotion; 2) interaction, which is the modification of behavior as a result of interpersonal activity; 3) transference, which is a warm relationship established between the group member and the leader and between the member and the group; and 4) identification, which is an association with other people resulting in a reproduction of characteristics found in others or in the group.

The most significant functions or results of group activity are: 1) enlarged confidence, which members gain through association with a group; 2) socialization, which is activity stimulated on a social level; 3) re-education, which is accomplished more easily in the group situation; and 4) a laboratory in social living, which is found in the creation of a reality situation.

3. Although these dynamics have not been recognized consciously by the church, they have been operating to some degree in group activities during the entire history of Christianity. In tracing the emergence of some of the most significant group activity from the time of Christ to the present it is found that such activity has been at the core of the vitality of Christianity and has been instrumental in keeping Christianity a vital force in the life of the times.

4. The value of the group itself as a therapeutic agent has been recognized by medical men only in fairly recent times. The importance of the group for therapy was first recognized by Dr. Joseph Pratt and his followers working in medical clinics. Much of the experimental work in the past and in the present has centered in the field of mental illness. Dr. J. L. Moreno, working concurrently with Pratt but along an entirely different line, developed more-than-verbal methods which have now come into quite general use. Various emphases in contemporary group therapy are classified under two headings: the methods of verbalization and the more-than-verbal approaches.

The methods of verbalization and intellectualization include such practices as the spiritual approach illustrated by Alcoholics Anonymous, the intellectual approach illustrated by Sherman's work with navy men, and the analytic approach illustrated by Schilder. The more-than-verbal methods include such practices as the psychodrama of Moreno and the activity therapy of Slavson.

5. A detailed study of the Classes in Applied Psychology at the Boston Dispensary indicates how a group can be used to further therapy and suggests methods that could be employed by the church. The improvement indicated by 67 per cent of the new members present for at least five times can be attributed largely to the group situation. Although the statisti-

cal study is not conclusive due to the small number of cases involved, it is nevertheless significant since its results correlate well with the results obtained in other similar studies.

6. The needs of the average person for significant group association is clearly shown in the Peckham experiment. A descriptive analysis of organizations at St. Mark's Methodist Church indicates the wide diversity of group activity which can help to meet the needs and interests of most people. Such typical organizations make an excellent contribution to the social needs of the members but are often lacking in the kind of creative fellowship that is of real therapeutic value.

7. Existing groups such as those found at St. Mark's can serve a greater therapeutic purpose by utilizing insights gained from medical group therapy. The significance of interpersonal relations and the value of a laboratory-for-life approach need to be recognized. The leader needs to be trained in understanding group dynamics and in seeing his role clearly as a catalyst and an instigator of group interaction. A democratic atmosphere needs to be created in order that the group members may interact creatively. The group needs to be developed around common purposes and should be flexible enough for a continuous reorganization in terms of needs. The goal of religious group activity should be a creative fellowship in which the healing and development of

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the members in their adjustment to life is a primary consideration.

2. CONCLUSIONS

Several conclusions can be drawn from this study of group therapy and its application to the church.

1. The church has a unique opportunity for aiding maladjusted persons through its group organizations provided that the potentialities of group activity are recognized. The very fact that the church does not advertise therapy as one of its purposes makes the possibility of therapy even greater. The reluctance of poorly adjusted persons to seek psychiatric help is largely overcome by the non-medical aspect of church activities, and so the way is kept open for forming the interpersonal associations which are so greatly needed today. Moreover, church groups provide a fairly comprehensive cross-section of society within which the normal and the not-so-normal persons can mingle with mutual advantage. Other organizations, to be sure, can and often do help to fill the need for group association but no other institution is better prepared to provide such comprehensive coverage of all age and interest groups, and no other group organization is so committed to such altruistic purposes and to such all-inclusive membership. The descriptive study of St. Mark's helps to make this clear even though St. Mark's is admittedly lacking at some points. Other

churches with more complete programs would meet the needs even better.

2. A continuing study of the findings of group practices in medical and other fields can be exceedingly profitable for the church. Group processes are best understood through clinical observations of functioning groups, but religious leaders are generally unable to carry out such research due to heavy miscellaneous responsibilities and due also to lack of adequate training. It becomes all the more important, therefore for religious leaders to have access to the findings of applicable research. The contribution of this dissertation lies in part in its efforts at integrating knowledge from the two fields of medicine and religion, fields in which there has generally been little interchange either of knowledge or of understanding. Although the emphasis in this dissertation has been on medical practice, there is an ever increasing fund of knowledge in the fields of group work and of social psychology and the church would do well to keep abreast of these findings, also.

3. Religious leaders need to be trained for their role in group activities. Although the organization and supervision of groups is a major responsibility of religious leaders and especially of ministers, little or no attention is given to an understanding of group processes in the

long years of theological preparation. The current emphasis on a person-centered ministry needs to be expanded so that the person is seen in the light of the interpersonal relations which vitally affect him. Most of the work of the pastor is carried on in a social setting but few pastors have a good understanding of the part the setting plays in their work.

An essential part of this training would be the acquiring of skill in using the tools of sociometric research. All group activities lend themselves to accurate observation, critical analysis, and to careful recording and only as religious leaders become adept in such work can group work within the church be understood fully. The history of the church is filled with examples of group activity as has been indicated. When studies of successful groups of the past are supplemented by careful research in contemporary church activity, the role of the group can be more fully appreciated and utilized. A detailed study of the programs in progressive churches today, such as that in Roy Burkhart's First Community Church, would help to supplement the descriptive analysis made above of St. Mark's Church. A detailed study of a religious group to parallel the study made of the Classes in Applied Psychology would help to supplement the work of this dissertation.

4. Effective church work in groups demands not only a clear understanding of group processes but also a good

grasp of dynamic, interpersonal psychology. The best group work has a double orientation in the group and in the individual. The purpose of the group is thought of in terms of meeting the needs of the individual through interpersonal activity. The church does not serve its purpose if it is merely an association of individuals; it must become a creative, interacting fellowship in which individual motivations are understood, personality mechanisms are accepted, and opportunities for modification of behavior are provided. It must be activity that involves a sharing of values and a working toward a common goal.

5. The church gains an increasing and understanding from group therapy of the need for developing a more functional approach. Steeped as the church is in an authoritative, ecclesiastical tradition, it is exceedingly difficult to create the permissive, voluntary atmosphere which is most conducive to personal growth, but it is only as the church recognizes the inadequacy of efforts at indoctrination through an authoritative "thus saith the Lord" approach that progress in helping persons to mature can be attained. The church through its fellowship groups can become a laboratory for living in which individuals learn how to meet life through experimental efforts in a relatively controlled situation. Maturity in spiritual appreciation as well as in social adjustment is stimulated not through doctrine imposed from above but through personal experience in an

actual social setting. As the church learns to give more attention to its group activity with an eye toward providing opportunities for such creative experiences it will be fulfilling a unique and much needed role in contemporary life. Not only will it be serving a significant function in the prevention of mental illness, but it will also be opening doors to a fuller and happier life for all its members. The opportunity for the church of tomorrow lies in the therapy that its creative groups can accomplish.

GROUP THERAPY AS A METHOD
FOR CHURCH WORK

Abstract of a Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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The Christian Church has always been interested in therapy but it has shown little real understanding of the great therapeutic possibilities that lie in its group activities. It is the purpose of this dissertation to help the church to understand better how its groups can be used to accomplish significant therapy. By applying to church work the principles and methods found effective in group psychotherapy this dissertation helps to make available to the church some of the significant insights discovered in medical research in group treatment. The emphasis is not on the creation of new church groups designed especially for therapy but is, instead, on the more effective use of existing groups.

The dynamics of group therapy are first set forth in chapter two in terms of their structure and function. Chapter three surveys group activity in the Christian Church showing how some of the dynamics of group therapy have been employed consciously or unconsciously throughout the history of the church. Chapters four and five trace the emergence of the principles of therapy in specific group experimentation in medical and psychiatric clinics and give illustrations of contemporary practice. Chapter six presents a detailed study of the Classes in Applied Psychology at the Boston Dispensary as a typical instance of effective therapy and describes a statistical study which supports the claims of the class. Chapter seven describes the program of group

activity in a typical church and points out how the church can benefit from the application of insights gained from group therapy.

The dynamic principles of therapy in groups of all types are fundamentally the same. Classified in terms of their structure or the patterns of relationship they are: 1) interstimulation, which is the intensification of the central emotion; 2) interaction, which is the modification of behavior as a result of interpersonal activity; 3) transference, which is the warm relationship established between the group member and the leader and between the member and the group; and 4) identification, which is an association with other persons resulting in a reproduction of characteristics found in others or in the group. The dynamics classified in terms of their function or the results achieved are: 1) enlarged confidence, which members gain through association with a group; 2) socialization, which is activity stimulated on a social level; 3) re-education, which is accomplished more easily in the group situation; and 4) a laboratory in social living, which is found in the creation of a reality situation.

Many of these dynamic forces appear in group activity throughout the history of the Christian Church. Typical creative groups have been found in groups such as the twelve disciples, the Apostolic Church, the Montanists, the Monastic Movement, the Waldenses, the Franciscans, the Friends of

God, the Brethren of the Common Life, the German Pietists, the Anabaptists, the Society of Friends, the Methodists, the Evangelical Revivals, the Christian Communistic Communities of Amana and Oneida, the Iona Community, the Christian Scientists, the Emmanuel Movement, the Oxford Group Movement, and in the contemporary First Community Church in Columbus, Ohio. From a study of such groups it becomes apparent that creative, interacting groups have been at the core of the vitality of Christianity throughout the ages.

The most helpful scientific work in analyzing group therapeutic processes has come from medical circles. Dr. Joseph H. Pratt of Boston founded scientific group therapy when he began to experiment with class treatment of tuberculosis in 1905. In later years this work was carried over into the field of psychosomatic medicine and eventually into the treatment of the psychoneuroses. Dr. Pratt's Thought Control Class, organized in 1930, was the first of several similar efforts at dealing with psychoneurotics in medical clinics. Another line of development centered in mental hospitals under the leadership of such therapists as Marsh, Lazell, Wender, Schilder, and others. A third line, begun by Dr. Jacob L. Moreno in Vienna in 1908, stressed more-than-verbal methods and developed into such work as psychodrama and play therapy.

Contemporary practices in group therapy which illustrate methods and principles of value for church work fall

into two general classifications, methods of verbalization and more-than-verbal approaches. Verbal methods include such practices as the spiritual approach illustrated by Alcoholics Anonymous, the intellectual approach illustrated by Sherman's work with Navy men, and the analytic approach illustrated by Schilder. The more-than-verbal methods include such practices as the psychodrama of Moreno and the activity therapy of Slavson.

A detailed study of the Classes in Applied Psychology with which the writer is intimately connected indicates how a group can be used to further therapy and suggests methods that could be employed by the church. A study of results as reported by class members in a questionnaire indicates that at least 67 per cent of those attending five or more sessions have received benefit. This significant therapeutic result can be attributed largely to the group situation.

The need of the so called normal person for therapeutic group association is indicated by the prevalence of psychoneuroses in our society and is further substantiated by the studies conducted at the Peckham Pioneer Health Center in London. Through its group organizations the church can provide the satisfying, interpersonal relations so greatly needed in our day. A study of the rather typical organizational program of St. Mark's Methodist Church indicates the wide diversity of group activities that are available to meet the needs and interests of its members.

Such existing groups, however, can serve a greater therapeutic purpose by utilizing insights gained from group therapy. The significance of interpersonal relations and the value of a laboratory-for-life approach need to be recognized. The leader needs to be trained in understanding group dynamics and in seeing his role clearly as a catalyst and an instigator of group interaction. A democratic atmosphere needs to be created in order that the group members may interact creatively. The group needs to be developed around common purposes and should be flexible enough for a continuous reorganization in terms of needs. The goal of religious group activity should be a creative fellowship in which the healing and development of the members in their adjustment to life is a primary consideration.

Several conclusions are drawn from this study of group therapy and its application to the church.

1. The church has a unique opportunity for aiding maladjusted persons through its group organization provided that the potentialities of group activity are recognized. No other institution is better prepared to provide such comprehensive coverage of all age and interest groups, and no other group organization is so committed to such altruistic purposes with such inclusive membership.

2. Because the church has given little attention to research in group processes, it is desirable that continuing study be made of the findings of group practice in other

fields. Group processes are best understood through clinical observation of functioning groups and such work has been carried on largely outside of the church.

3. Religious leaders need to be trained for their role in group activities since a major portion of the program of the church is carried on through groups. This training should include the acquiring of skill in using approved methods of sociometric research through clinical observation, recording, and study of interacting groups. With such trained leadership the church can make its own unique contribution to the better understanding of groups.

4. For effective group work the religious leader needs an understanding of dynamic, interpersonal psychology. Church groups do not accomplish their purpose until they become creative, interacting fellowships in which individual motivations are understood, personality mechanisms are accepted, and opportunities for modification of behavior are provided. Church groups need to meet the needs of people in terms of high purposes and constructive goals.

5. The church needs to develop a more functional approach in which the traditional authoritative attitude gives way to a democratic, voluntary atmosphere. Through its fellowship groups the church can become a laboratory for living in which individuals learn how to meet life through experimental efforts in a relatively controlled situation. Maturity in spiritual appreciation as well as in social adjustment

is stimulated not through doctrine imposed from above but through personal experience in an actual social setting. The church has a real opportunity for meeting some of the urgent health needs of our society through its creative group activities.

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A P P E N D I X E S

-- APPENDIX A --

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THE
CLASSES IN APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY

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THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

From the first settlement of the city to the present time, the history of Boston is a history of the growth of a great city, and of the development of a great people.

The city of Boston was founded in 1630, and has since that time been a center of commerce and industry, and a seat of learning and culture.

The city of Boston has been a center of commerce and industry, and a seat of learning and culture, and has played a prominent part in the history of the United States.

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Paul E. Johnson, "Religious Psychology and Health," Mental Hygiene, 31 (October, 1947), 556-66.

George W. Kisker, "Take Your Medicine -- in Classes," Coronet, 23 (January, 1948), 165-68.

-- APPENDIX B --

COPY OF QUESTIONNAIRE USED

(A note which accompanied the questionnaire began with these words: "We are asking for your help as we try to improve the Classes in Applied Psychology.")

Your Name _____ Age _____ Date _____

1. What were your main symptoms when you first came to class? _____

2. What symptoms have improved? _____

3. What symptoms have not improved? _____

4. Have you been helped in any other way? _____

5. How have you been helped by the class? Check one of the following:

a. Completely cured _____ d. No change _____

b. Greatly helped _____ e. Feel worse _____

c. Some improvement _____

6. If you have benefited from attending these classes, what has been most helpful? _____

7. How do you think the classes could be improved? _____



Robert Campbell Leslie, the son of Elmer A. and Helen Noon Leslie, was born in Concord, Massachusetts, October 20, 1917. He attended the public schools of Brookline, Massachusetts and received the A. B. degree from DePauw University in 1939. In 1942 he received the S. T. B. degree (magna cum laude) from Boston University School of Theology and was elected to the Frank D. Howard Fellowship. A member of the New England Conference of the Methodist Church, he was the pastor of the Methodist Church in Peabody, Massachusetts, for two years and then entered the U. S. Army (May, 1943) as a chaplain for three and a half years of service. Following discharge he travelled in Europe, Egypt, and Palestine and then resumed graduate work at Boston University. For three

semesters (1947-48) he was one of the graduate assistants in the department of Psychology of Religion. During the summer of 1947 he was a Course Assistant at the Clinical Training course of the Institute of Pastoral Care at the Massachusetts General Hospital. During the last year he has been the director of a weekly Class in Applied Psychology at the Boston Dispensary and in the last six months has been the part-time chaplain at the Boston Psychopathic Hospital. He was married in 1941 to Paula Eddy and has one son.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY



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